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THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH
AND THE
PRIMACY OF ROME

THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH
AND THE
PRIMACY OF ROME

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PREFACE

THIS book demands an introduction, which, I am afraid, will have to be mainly occupied with myself.

Until eighteen months ago I was a member of the Society of Jesus; now I am no more so. I was not expelled from that Society. I left it of my own accord, because the religious opinions and doctrines I held did not any longer agree with the opinions and doctrines held sacred by that Society.

As long as I remained in the Society of Jesus my Superiors never complained of me for reasons other than those connected with differences in doctrine. On this point I can appeal to all the Jesuits who have known me. I served the Society of Jesus for twenty-seven years with the utmost fidelity,

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obedience, and self-sacrifice. I taught science, literature, and languages in several colleges of the Society, both at home and abroad; *i.e.* in Europe and Asia. I have preached the Word of God in different countries and languages, and for five years I was a regular writer on the staff of the Jesuit magazine *La Civiltà Cattolica*, which is published at Rome under the eye of the Pope, and in the interest of the Papacy. Things being so, why have I left the Society of Jesus, and rebelled against the Church of Rome?

The history of these last two years of my life was narrated in a letter which I addressed to the Italian newspaper *Il Corriere della Sera*, from which I venture to make a few quotations. This letter was almost forced from me by the stupid reports which liberal and clerical papers circulated about me. Here it is:

“I left the Society of Jesus for reasons of conscience, for which I am answerable to none, save to God alone. But those reasons

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were not the only ones. For this last year, owing to doctrinal accusations brought by unknown people against me, my Superiors first forbade me to live in large cities and centres of culture; then they made it impossible for me to hold any intercourse with learned men, to study, to write, to print any book, to exercise in any way my natural inclination for scientific studies; they forbade me to preach, they relegated me to a town of secondary importance, where I could have no contact whatever with books or students; I was ordered to live there without any settled duty or fixed occupation; finally, they commanded me never to go out of the house without one of my brethren, who was to keep a watch upon my private conversations and report them to my Superiors. And all this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

“Were these rigorous measures against me in any way justified? Was I the heretic and modernist I was supposed to be? I answer briefly and simply: I was condemned

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not only before I knew who were my accusers, but before any definite charge against me in doctrinal matters had been stated. Later on I came to know the wrong opinions (from the Roman point of view) and religious doctrines which were imputed to me; but, as a matter of fact, many of those opinions were never held by me: nay, I had preached and written against some of them publicly and explicitly. I acknowledged others as mine; but they were minor points of doctrine, or opinions accepted and vindicated by a host of theologians and learned men. At any rate, most of my religious opinions referred to free theological matter; they did not appertain to the faith.

“Feeling sure of my just claim, I asked the Superiors not to inflict upon me such a serious punishment for faults either not committed or greatly exaggerated. I was denied any justice. My Superiors, however, acknowledged in writing that I had never publicly preached erroneous doctrines; but they persisted in carrying out my punishment.

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I appealed from my local Superiors to the General of the whole Society. My appeal was rejected. I asked permission to go to Rome to clear myself personally of the charges brought against me. I was denied even this last favour. I inquired of a friend whether the authorities of the Roman Church would, if appealed to, look into my case and protect me against my Superiors. I was answered that the tribunal of the Church could and would do nothing in my behalf. There was, then, nothing left for me but to submit to a life of slavery and idleness in the Society of Jesus, or to rebel against the Society and the Church. I chose the latter course. I wrote a letter to my Superiors and abandoned the Society and the Roman Church.”

Surely no sensible man will wonder at the resolution I then took. I was still young, healthy, vigorous; endowed, moreover, with an intense wish to study, to preach, to write, to employ myself in the service of my neighbours. I saw myself reduced, by a false and

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absurd religious system, to impotence, condemned to the most abject slavery, the slavery of my mind and soul, doomed to a sure, though slow, destruction of my own personality. At one stroke I broke off the chains of my slavery, and returned to the liberty of the children of God. What man of sense, I repeat, can wonder at my rebellion?

I should like, however, to make three statements in this connection. The first is this. Although in these last years of my life, owing to my studies, my mind and soul turned to a purer, a more spiritual and evangelical conception of Christianity, yet, in public, I never preached any but Roman Catholic doctrines. About this I possess the written testimony of my Superiors. I acted in this way because I think it is highly immoral and dishonest for a clergyman to preach doctrines not received by the Church of which he is the paid minister. For these last three years of my life I ceased preaching on certain points of Roman doctrine which I did not any longer believe, *e.g.* on the Papacy, the

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Church, the nature of the sacraments, character, and the like; but I can affirm, with truth, that never for a moment did I betray my conscience or the Church.

In the second place I maintain that I should never have had the courage to set myself in open opposition to the Church of Rome had I not been pushed to it by the fanaticism of the people amongst whom I lived and by the domestic persecution to which, on account of my views, I was for three years subjected. Tyranny, when continued, begets rebellion. The Roman Church and my old friends, of course, deplore my secession from the Church. But they have only to thank for it that body of ignorant and fanatical priests and monks in whose hands the direction of the Romish Church lies to-day and will continue to lie. By forcing me to believe and to preach all sorts of superstitions and errors which they put into circulation by their pulpits and in their books, they induced me first to doubt, then to disbelieve, dogmas and points of Roman doctrine

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which to me were once true, sacred, infallible, divine. But whose fault was this? History repeats itself: Rome, by wishing to get all, must, in the end, lose all.

Finally, I was obliged to leave the Society of Jesus and the Church because I lay under the imputation of being a modernist; but in truth I never was one. My friends, the Italian and English modernists, may testify if I was ever in sympathy with their beliefs and their ideas. As a matter of fact, I opposed that religious movement from the very beginning, and I did not conceal from Father Tyrrell my distrust of it. I knew for certain that it was bound to fail, because it lacked a sound foundation. On the one hand, modernism rejects the New Testament as the sole foundation of Christianity; on the other hand, it likewise discards the Papacy as the support of the Church. My faith, on the contrary, rests on the Bible, and on the Bible alone; not the Bible of the extreme Higher Critics, but the Bible of those religious reformers and learned theologians, who in

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the sixteenth century revolted successfully against the Roman Church. Their faith is mine, their belief is my belief.

My readers will, I hope, not find it amiss if I subjoin here the story of my intellectual change. In 1896 I was at Bombay in India, waiting for a steamer which was to carry me to my college in South Canara. A German Jesuit, since dead, asked me to write an article against a local Anglican paper, which had commented in a rather ill-natured way on the "Claims of the Papacy." I was fresh from my studies, and a newly made doctor in theology. I thought it was an easy thing to convince my Anglican writer of the weakness of his position; so I set to work immediately. In the course of my article I quoted against him certain words by St. Cyprian in his treatise *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, which, as it seemed to me, settled once for all the lawfulness of the claims of the Papacy to universal domination. My friend the German Jesuit read my article, smiled, stared at me, and asked me where

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I had studied my theology. "You do not know," he said, "that the words you have just quoted were never uttered or written by St. Cyprian? And you mean to say that in Italy it is not generally known that they are a later interpolation in St. Cyprian's works?"

These words stung me to the quick. At first I wondered if my friend's bold assertion could be true; but a short study of the question convinced me that it was unquestionably so. Then I got very indignant at having been basely imposed upon by my Professors of Theology, who, either through culpable ignorance were not aware of the famous interpolation in Cyprian's works, or, in the interest of the Papacy, had preferred to ignore it. I suspected, therefore, that as I had once been deceived in my studies, I might have been so God knows how often besides. In consequence, I resolved, there and then, to study the whole of my theology over again for myself.

I have been true to my resolve of 1896.

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For ten long years, in the midst of a very eventful life and manifold studies, in India, in Europe, as a teacher, a preacher, a writer in the *Civiltà Cattolica*, I never forgot my beloved studies of theology. I went over again all the treatises; I read the Fathers of the Church in their most recent editions; I thought a good deal on the origins of Christianity; I made myself acquainted with several histories of Christian dogma; I took a keen interest in everything appertaining to Patristic and Biblical criticism, and, finally, I left nothing undone that might clear up my doubts and make my heart at peace with my mind. And note this: my studies were carried on almost exclusively with the help of Catholic books and scholars; as with regard to theology I consulted Mazrella, Billiot, Stentrup, Wiceburgenses, Hurter, De Augustinis, Lepicier, Pepe, and others, not to say anything of the older schoolmen and theologians of the sixteenth century. For the history of Christian dogma I read Bellarminus, Thomassin, Bingham, Rauschen, Moehler,

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Bardenhewer, Schwane, Turmel, and Harnack, to whom I must add for other subjects, Gore, Fairbairn, and Salmon, whose books I read but recently, when my ideas had already developed to my present evangelical standard of faith.

These studies, conducted by me with scientific honesty, severity of method, and conscientious fidelity, convinced me that the Christian doctrine which the Church of Rome serves up to her priests and faithful members is not the theology of the Bible or of the Primitive Christian Church, but an artificial system, based partly on Holy Scripture, partly on Aristotelian philosophy, partly also on apocryphal texts, on legends of doubtful authority, on wilful alterations and interpolations of ancient canons, on superstitions and relics of old heathenism. Finally, I persuaded myself that *a catholic* or *a truly universal consent* on the dogmas of the Roman Church existed neither in the past nor in the present.

These opinions, of course, are far from

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being received in the Roman Church. They are officially condemned as heretical and Protestant, and opposed to Catholic doctrines. Therefore, at the end of my studies, I found myself deeply at variance with the official creed of my Church.

“What will a learned man do,” asked V. Ermoni in the *Quinzaine* of February 16, 1904, “if, at the close of deep and conscientious studies, he arrives at conclusions which in no manner agree with the official creed of his Church? Ought he to reject the dearest convictions of his conscience and turn his back on what he believes to be the truth?” He should continue to study, answers Ermoni, and endeavour to change opinion. But if that is not possible? In this case, Ermoni adds, the learned man has no other alternative but this: he must say, from the bottom of his heart, “I believe and I adore.”

Ermoni's solution of the case is right and good when the mind of the pious and learned Christian is anxious about the fundamental mysteries of Christianity, which we can indeed

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believe but not understand. This was not my case; I never for a moment doubted the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. What detached me from Rome was not her Christianity, but her Paganism; not the Bible which is preserved by her, but the arbitrary interpretations of Holy Scripture which she imposes on the Christian world; not the much good that is in her, but the evils of degeneration, of superstition, of idolatry, which her priests are required by her to accept, to practise, and to defend with scholastic sophistries and Aristotelian subtleties.

This was the turning-point of my life. Had I listened to the world or to the voice of the flesh, I should not have left the Society of Jesus, much less the Church. I had nothing to gain, but everything to lose by the change. On the contrary, Italy is the happy land of compromises and of peace at all costs. Moreover, it is highly fashionable with us openly to disagree with the religious creed of the Church and at the same time

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to profess oneself a good and obedient Catholic, I could not do so. I could not preach doctrines which I did not believe, profess, as divinely revealed, dogmas which I knew to be human inventions ; defend customs, rites, and usages which I held to be superstitious ; finally, I could not accept the claims of the Papacy, which my studies had shown me to be not primitive, but unscriptural and maintained in opposition to half the world. My duty to God and my conscience was clear : I protested against the Roman Church and left her fold.

This book contains the substance and the conclusions of a few of those momentous questionings which for ten long years occupied my thoughts. It does not pretend to much theology. In fact, I wrote it rather to clear up my own ideas than to be read by others. But friends for whom I have much regard suggested to me that I should print it, as it might do some good to souls who were in the same spiritual difficulties as my own. I comply with their advice, and present it

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in an English dress to the indulgent reader, who, I am sure, will see for himself that, with my actual Evangelical faith, I could not honestly remain any longer pledged to obey the Pope.

I acknowledge here a debt of deep gratitude to the Rev. Donald Matheson, of Oxford. But for him this book could not have seen the light of day in its English vesture.

GIORGIO BARTOLI.

Florence.

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CHAPTER I

THE TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Ἡ ἀλήθεια ἐλευθερώσει ὑμᾶς.—'Ιωαν. viii. 32

ABOUT five hundred and fifty millions of the human race profess Christianity. Of those five hundred and fifty millions all that can think for themselves and are truly Christians, not only nominally so, admit the following Christian doctrines: They recognise the divinity of Christ. They hold that Christ established a religious society which is called a Church. They recognise that Christ left certain truths or doctrines to that Society or Church. Finally, they admit that the acceptance of Christ's doctrines and the practice of the Christian life are the bonds which unite the members into one society, one Church, one body formed by Him.

One fact, however, stares them in the face. They cannot close their eyes to the stern

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reality that many distinct institutions claim the right of being called the Church of Christ, each one of them holding a special doctrine which they put forward as the doctrine of Christ, but which, nevertheless, disagrees with the doctrine held by any other of the institutions.

Hence the difficulty which besets the inquirer, religiously inclined, is twofold. He asks himself: "1. To what society does the name 'Church of Christ' really and by right belong? 2. How far is unity in doctrine necessary to the unity of the Church?"

To these two questions the Church of Rome has one answer only. She alone, of all Churches, is the true Church of Christ—and she alone, exclusively of all other Christian institutions, possesses in its purity and entirety the doctrine of Christ, and is its legally appointed and authorised teacher.

The Roman Church holds herself to be the only, the unique and true Church of Jesus Christ. She declares all other Churches heretical, schismatical, false; and their followers out of the fold, cut off from the living Christ, and condemned to the everlasting fire of hell.

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The Church of Rome has stated this awful belief in an almost infinite number of official documents, from the early Middle Ages down to our own times. Nay, since the days of the Lutheran Reformation her voice has become, if possible, even sterner and louder in proclaiming herself the only true Church of Christ. In consequence, she “not only forbids the Catholic to profess that religion which he, led by the natural light of reason, believes to be true,” but, moreover, “forbids him to hope for the eternal salvation of such as do not live in the bosom of the true Church of Christ, which is only the Roman Church.”¹ *Extra Ecclesiam, nulla salus*. Out of the Church (Roman) there is no salvation.

Here is, for instance, the definition of the Fourth Lateran Council (cap. *Firmiter*). “The Universal Church of the faithful is one (the Roman), out of which not even one gets salvation”: *nullus omnino salvatur*. And Innocent III., in the *Profession of Faith* prescribed to the Waldenses: “We believe with the heart and profess with the mouth one Church only: not the Church of the

¹ Pius IX., in the *Syllabus*, Propos. XV., XVII.

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heretics, but the holy, Catholic, Apostolic Roman Church, out of which, we believe, not one finds salvation." And Eugenius IV. in the Bull *Cantate Domino*: "(The Church) firmly believes and professes that not one who is not in the Church (not Pagans, not even Jews, heretics, or schismatics) shall ever partake of life eternal, . . . if before his death he does not join the same Church; and that the unity of the ecclesiastical body is so very necessary that the sacraments help towards eternal life only those that live in the bosom of the Church." The same doctrine was several times proclaimed by Pope Gregory XVI., by Pius IX. in his Encyclical of August 10, 1864, and elsewhere in the Syllabus, as above referred to. I add here a few words of Pope Pius IX.'s Encyclical, because they are very significant: "We must again and again," he says, "mention and condemn the most grievous error which is entertained by some Catholics, who think that heretics, who live far away from the true faith and Catholic unity, may yet arrive at eternal life. This opinion is absolutely contrary to the Catholic doctrine."

I know that many a Roman theologian

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has turned his mind and pen to soften the rigidity of this doctrine ; but their efforts have, on the whole, proved abortive. As long as words have a definite meaning, the official words of the Church, referred to above, will for ever proclaim that “out of the Roman fold there is no salvation.” And that this is their genuine meaning may be gathered also from the fact that, as often as a Roman theologian has ventured to print a book upholding the milder doctrine, or explaining away the more rigid one, he has immediately been silenced, and his book put on the *Index Expurgatorius* as infected with liberalism and laxity of opinions. This fate befell, a few years ago, Rev. Fr. Castelein, S.J., who wrote a book to show that, after all, there was some hope for Pagans, heretics, and schismatics. He was immediately ordered to hold his peace, and a ferocious Redemptorist Father, F. X. Godts, wrote an awful book, *De Paucitate Salvandorum*, against him, and showed, to his own immense satisfaction, that the Roman Church has always taught that the majority of men “go literally to the devil.” And he adds that this doctrine is deemed by certain theologians to be of the

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essence of faith (*dicitur esse de fide*); by others “more than true, common, certain,” and that it was upheld by universal tradition, by twenty-three Fathers of the Church, doctors, and saints; by seventy-four theologians and commentators on Holy Writ; in fine, that it can quote for itself all the Church documents.¹

It is true that Roman divines, in treating of Justification, are forced to grant that “an act of perfect charity will justify a man,” even if he be out of the Roman fold. The Scriptures are too explicit on this subject to be gainsaid. However, when they pass on to explain how a heretic may make an act of perfect charity they cause it to be so difficult as to render it wellnigh impossible. First of all, an invincible ignorance is necessary to the heretic, that he may be thereby excused from joining the Roman Church, which alone is the true Church of Christ, and in which alone salvation is possible. Moreover, if the heretic be a sinner and wants to repent of his sins, he must excite himself to perfect contrition; because imperfect contrition may

¹ Franciscus Xav. Godts, O.F.R., *De Paucitate Salvandorum*. Bruxellis, 1895.

suffice to Roman Catholics, when they confess their sins ; but *perfect* contrition is demanded from all those that are out of the Roman fold. But then who can get perfect contrition ? Perfect charity and perfect contrition are so difficult, according to the majority of Roman divines, that the Roman Church logically, if somewhat cruelly, forbids the faithful to “hope for the eternal salvation of those that live and die out of her fold” (Pius IX., *Syllabus*, Propos. XVII.).

In pondering over this awful doctrine, which is not the doctrine of this or that Roman theologian, but the official doctrine of the Church, one might think the non-Catholics to be very few in number, so as to matter very little, after all, if they go to hell. *De minimis non curat prætor.*

But, just the reverse is the real truth. The Christians not in communion with Rome, when all told, surpass the Roman Catholics by almost eighteen millions ; as will be made clear from the following tables, compiled by the Rev. Fr. Krose, S.J., for *Die Katholischen Missionen*, in 1904. The learned author has followed in his statistics *Die Bevölkerung der Erde, Das Diplomatisches Jahrbuch* (Gotha),

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Les Missions Catholiques, the statistics published yearly by the *Propaganda Fide*, and other reliable sources.

Country.	Catholics.	Protestants.	Orthodox Greeks.	Oriental Greeks.
Europe . .	177,657,261	97,293,434	97,059,645	220,394
America . .	71,330,879	62,556,967	—	—
Asia . . .	11,513,276	1,926,108	12,034,149	2,726,053
Africa . .	3,004,563	1,663,341	53,479	3,608,466
Oceania . .	979,948	3,187,259	—	—
Totals . .	264,485,927	166,627,109	109,147,273	6,554,913

If we put together the Protestants and the orthodox and oriental Greeks, we get the sum of 282,329,295, *i.e.* 17,843,368 non-Catholics more than the Roman Catholics. Taking these statistics for probable, if not for certain, because others skilled in statistics reckon the non-Catholics at over 300 millions, I thus continue my argument. Is it possible, or even credible, that 282 millions of non-Roman Catholics are out of the true Church of Christ, and thereby destined, as well as the Pagans, to Gehenna? If that be so, then to what is the Church of Christ reduced? To a very small minority of mankind indeed, because, though numerically Roman Catholics

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are reckoned at 264 millions, yet very few millions are nowadays to be found amongst them that profess the whole body of the Roman doctrines and live up to the religious practices of their Church. This is no gratuitous assumption on my part; it is a fact as widely known in Roman ecclesiastical circles as it is admitted and regretted by all thinking men of that Church. Our age is the age of liberalism, and a liberal education brings with it a more or less complete divorce from the doctrines held sacred by the Roman Church. The Roman hierarchy still holds her own, yet the mass of the educated people falls away from her. France is not the only well-known instance. Italy very closely follows the sister Latin country. Austria is more than half gone, and even Ireland, Catholic Ireland, nurses the seed of future rebellions. Half her children that leave her green shores fall away from the Roman Church, or give up the practice of their religion. Very significant, moreover, is the fact that the classes that thus forsake their mother, the Church, are chiefly the educated ones, *i.e.* those in whose hands is, or is likely to be, the government of their countries.

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If, therefore, the only true Church of Christ is the Roman, we are forced to say that Christianity nowadays is reduced to a few millions of men and women, most of whom, moreover, profess rather the religion of a renovated Paganism than the true religion of the Gospel of Christ.

The difficulty is a weighty one, and has of late attracted a good deal of attention from thinking men of the Roman communion. Most theologians of the Church of Rome, whilst admitting the difficulty, confess their utter inability to solve it, and shelter themselves behind the dark shadow of mystery. They prefer openly to profess their ignorance rather than widen the limited horizon of their church-view. Others explain it away by having recourse to half a dozen systems of theology, veritable stumbling-blocks to faith, rather than helps to a pious and inquiring intellect. A few, finally, do not hesitate to admit that Christ has actually failed in His mission, and strengthen their position by quoting two or three Scriptural texts of difficult and dubious interpretation.

All these answers are downright blasphemy, sheer want of faith, or supine ignorance.

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The solution of the proposed difficulty is at hand. The Roman Catholic Church is a *local* Church, not the *universal* Church of Christ. The truly Catholic or universal Church of Christ is invisible, and to her by right belong all the chosen ones, though on earth they worship God and His Christ in different local Churches, by various rites and tongues, and under several Christian denominations.

Of course, the Roman Church rejects the theory of an invisible Church, which is, after all, the only true and universal Church of Christ. Yet surely every sane man must admit it. In fact, no one can say, with any semblance of truth, that a true and earnest Christian is in spiritual communion with the wicked and sinful members of his Church. The latter are indeed in the Church, but they are in it as the dead are in a town, *i.e.* with their bodies only, not with their souls. Moreover, the idea of an invisible Church, to express the body of true believers, who alone are the Church, to whatever community they belong, is very ancient. When our blessed Lord said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My

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name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. xviii. 20), He spoke clearly and unmistakably of His invisible Church on earth. And St. Ignatius Martyr expressed the same idea when he wrote: “Where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church” (*Ubi Christus est, ibi Catholica est Ecclesia*) (*Epistula ad Smyrneos*, cap. viii.). On which Dr. Gerardus Rauschen, a Roman Catholic scholar, remarks that “the words, *Catholica Ecclesia*, which occur here for the first time in Christian literature, mean the universal Church, of which Christ is the Head.”¹

Indeed from the first there was obviously a distinction between true and untrue Christians, between the spiritual and the carnal, between the vessels to honour and the vessels to dishonour. “It is better,” says St. Ignatius Martyr, “for a man to be silent and be a Christian, than to talk and not be one. The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.”¹ “The tree is known by its fruit: so those that profess themselves to be Christians are to be recognised by their conduct. For

¹ Gerardus Rauschen, *Florilegium Patristicum*. Bonnæ, 1904.

¹ St. Ignatius' *Epistle to the Ephesians*, chap. xv.

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there is not now a demand for mere profession, but that a man be found continuing in the power of faith to the end.”¹ “It is fitting, then, not only to be called Christians, but to be so in reality. For it is not the being called so that renders a man blessed.”²

The *Didache* teaches no other doctrine. “All true Christians are one, though scattered over the world, and God, the Head of the Church, will gather them all from the four winds into His kingdom.”³ The theology of the *Didache* is clear. The Church is manifold, and will pass away, with its various organisations; the kingdom of God is one and will last for ever, here as a kingdom of grace, there as a kingdom of glory. When, therefore, Roman Catholic and High Church Anglican theologians maintain that “the idea of an invisible Church to express the body of true believers, who alone are the Church, to whatever community they belong, is an idea entirely at variance with Scripture and all pre-Reformation teaching,”⁴ they assert a thing which they cannot prove. If the early

¹ St. Ignatius' *Epistle to the Ephesians*, chap. xiv.

² Id., *Epistle to the Magnesians*, chap. iv.

³ *Didache*, ix. 4; x. 5.

⁴ Cf. *Lux Mundi*, “The Church,” by Rev. W. Lock, p. 275.

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Christian literature distinguishes between true and untrue Christians, between the Church and the kingdom, it distinguishes between a visible and an invisible Church. True, the words "visible and invisible Church" do not occur; but it matters little. We do not look for the words where we have the idea. The visible Church was to the first Christians, as it is for us, "the Church" simply: they called the invisible Church, "kingdom." To the latter belong the Christians who live in perfect righteousness according to the Gospel, the true children of God, and all those who persevere to the end. All these form the kingdom of God upon earth.

This difference between the Church and the kingdom, *i.e.* between the visible and invisible Church, is likewise very apparent in those parables of our Lord which teach about the kingdom, and in such passages as "to them [to the poor in spirit, to the children] belongs the kingdom of heaven," and to "enter the kingdom," in Matt. v. 3, xviii. 3, 4; Mark x. 14; John iii. 5; or "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17). Finally, it is very significant

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that Christ uses *ἐκκλησία* only twice (in Matthew and nowhere else), but *βασιλεία* twenty-three times in Matthew alone.

I answer, in the second place, the Church of Rome not only denies the great truth of the invisibility of the Church, but she also gives a wrong definition of the visible Church. According to her, "the true Church of Christ is the society of the faithful, believing the doctrine of Christ, sharing in His sacraments, and in communion with the Pope of Rome." Now, this view of the Church of Christ is completely at variance with Holy Writ. Even when applied to the visible Church this definition is too limited and narrow; it excludes too many earnest and real Christians from the Church of Christ, and at most it may be said only of the local Church of Rome. Stern, real facts compel us to admit that "the visible Church of Christ consists of the sum-total of all Churches and believers that profess the essential doctrines of Christ and employ the most important, if not all, of the means of grace which He left for our eternal salvation."

The Christian Churches are thereby placed

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on a certain graduated scale of perfection and of intrinsic excellence. Those that drink more abundantly at the living fountain of the doctrine of Christ, and adhere more closely to His divine Gospel, stand at the top of the scale; others somewhat lower; others, finally, which have adulterated the divine message of Christ, so long as they do not reform themselves, are at the bottom of it.

As long, however, as the different Churches believe and practise what is essential to salvation both with regard to doctrine and to Christian life, they, although not strictly in communion with one another, are branches of the same tree, off-shoots of the same mother-root, vines of the same vineyard, brooklets from the same source, rays of the same sun—Christ the Lord.

A Roman divine will object at this point: "Your definition of the true Church of Christ destroys the unity of the Church. The Church, according to you, is nothing more than a congeries of Churches, often at war with one another on capital points of Christian doctrine, and differing from one another in manner of worship, in charity,

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in all. Such is not the true Church of Christ. "She is one, because she professes the same faith, accepts the same sacraments, obeys the same Bishops, and chiefly the Roman Pontiff."

To this I rejoin: The definition you give of the true Church of Christ defines the Roman Church, not the universal Church. The primitive Church never possessed the fancied unity which the Roman divines now claim for her. If she did not possess it when newly born, why should it be necessary now? If, when already grown up, she could exist and prosper without that strict mon-archic unity, why should she be in danger of perishing now? But more about this in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II

OF THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

WE are all familiar with the arguments with which Roman theologians demonstrate the monarchical unity and organisation of the Church of Christ. The Church is “the kingdom of Christ,” “the city of the great King,” “His rest and habitation for ever,” the “house of the living God,” the “fold of which Christ is the Shepherd,” the “body of which Christ is the Head,” the “spouse of which He is the bridegroom,” “the temple of God,” “the family of Christ.” All these metaphors, they say, imply in the Church of Christ a perfect unity, the unity which is possessed by the Roman Church only—*i.e.* unity of faith, unity of love, unity of sacraments, unity of government. My answer is that in this, as in other matters,

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the Roman theologians stretch their argument a little too far. The epithets lavished by the prophets of the Old Covenant, or by our Lord, upon the Church are, after all, metaphors, not strictly scientific definitions. They can be explained, each one of them, with regard to other characteristics or notes of the Church. The "kingdom of God," for instance, may refer to the greatness and influence to which the Church was, in the course of time, to attain; the "temple of God" to the dealings of God with each individual soul; "the household of Christ" to the activity of the members of the Christian community; the "fold" to the docility of Christians towards their supreme Shepherd, Christ. They imply also a certain unity, we readily grant it. But what kind of unity? Uniform or multiform? Is the unity of a kingdom of the same kind as that of a "city," of a "fold," of a "family," of a "temple," of a "body"? Who can say so? Moreover, is the word "kingdom" in the Gospels so specific as to mean a monarchy rather than a federation of republics, a democracy rather than an oligarchy? Who can solve this problem with certainty? Suppose Jesus meant

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all this, comprehensively not exclusively, collectively not singly, so as to include in His Church such absolute monarchies as the Church of Rome, moderate ones like the Greek, Oriental, and English Churches, and quasi-republics, like many other of the Christian Churches? But what if those metaphors meant a prophecy of the future? Certainly the evidence of St. Paul's Epistles shows us a very different scene in real life, that is, "a household" torn asunder by intestine discords, "a family" whose members were at variance amongst themselves, a "body" with tendencies to divisions, to selfishness, to sin. And what St. Paul saw in his days, that is, in the dawn of Christianity, we see likewise in our times. Those metaphors, therefore, may after all mean an ideal state of the Church to be attained in future, when, all races of mankind having become civilised, and men's minds being fully developed, all Christians will convince themselves that unity is to be sought in variety, peace in the union of hearts, fellowship of Christ in the love of God, of our Lord, and of their fellow-men. Furthermore, the metaphors referred to may indicate also a state

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or mode of being of the Church in the different periods of her earthly career, or in various parts of the world. The Church may be, for a time, in one country, "a household," *i.e.* a scene of active work; in another "a family," all love and peace; elsewhere a "temple of God," owing to the holiness and fervour of her children; in this soul she may become the "bride of Christ"; for a time, all over the world, the kingdom of God, for her grandeur and power; and so forth.

Neither may Roman divines, to prove the unity of the Church as conceived by them, have recourse to the sublime petition of our blessed Lord, addressed on the eve of His crucifixion to His Eternal Father: "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me; that they may be one, as We are. . . . Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us." This prayer, apparently, has only one meaning: Jesus asked his Eternal Father that all Christians that believe in Him should be one in charity as He is one with His

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Eternal Father—one in love, though distinct from His Father in person: and so all the Churches, though distinct amongst themselves, should love one another and be one in the charity of the Lord. All the ancient Fathers of the Church—all, none excepted—explained this prayer of our Lord by the love and charity we owe to one another, never by the monarchical and absolute unity of the Church.

St. Cyprian, to prove the unity of the Church, often quoted the words which occur in the Song of Solomon (vi. 9): “My dove, my undefiled, is *but one*; she is the *only one* of her mother, she is the *choice one* of her that bore her.” Now, apart from the mere word *one*, there is nothing in this text that may warrant an argument in favour of the unity of the Church; and one wonders at the simplicity of the great African Bishop, as also at the intellectual level of many of the Fathers of the early Church.

Even the Church of Rome and the majority of the Roman divines hold that two dogmatic texts only are to be found in the Bible with regard to the unity of the Church: one in St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians (iv. 3–6),

the other in St. Matthew (xvi. 13–19). Moreover, only St. Paul deals directly with the unity of the Church, St. Matthew's text being at most a valuable auxiliary to the former, not establishing by itself and alone the unity of the Church.

Now about St. Paul's very mysterious words a few remarks will suffice. First, it is simply marvellous that St. Paul, when speaking *ex professo* of the unity of the Church, should omit to mention the promise of Christ to St. Peter, and the prerogative granted to him of being, in the Roman sense, the rock upon which the Church was to be built, the centre, the origin, and the bond of unity. Did St. Paul believe that an actual union of the several Churches with Peter was essential to the unity of the Church? If so, why did he not mention it? He is content with saying, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." He never dreamt of saying, "One government, one organisation, one ruling Church, one monarchy, one empire."¹ How does that agree with the Roman claims?

¹ Cf. J. Corluy, S.J., *Spicilegium Dogmaticum Biblicum*, tom. i. p. 13. Gandavi, 1884.

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But there is something more. If words are to be taken in their obvious sense, the text of St. Paul favours the broader conception of the Church. The apostle exhorts the Ephesians to “keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.” To this end he reminds them that in the Church there is but “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.”

There is “one Lord,” *i.e.* Jesus Christ, received and worshipped alike by all Christian denominations. These are at variance often amongst themselves about minor points of Christian doctrine; but no Christian Church, even to this day, has ever rejected our Lord Jesus Christ. Whenever one did so she ceased being a Christian Church.

There is “one faith,” *i.e.* *faith in the Lord*, for the word *faith* in this verse cannot have any other meaning. St. Paul does not speak of the faith in general, of *the doctrines of Christianity*, as we might speak of them nowadays. For St. Paul, and for the early Christians, Jesus, the Lord, was all. Everything centred in Him. All who worshipped Him as Lord were held for Christians, even when, in other points of doctrine not directly

connected with Christ, they differed from the received opinions of the leaders of this or that Church. And the faith of the first Christians in our Lord was of the simplest kind. They believed Him to be true man and true God: God according to the Spirit, *κατὰ πνεῦμα*, *i.e.* the heavenly part, the invisible, the spiritual aspect; man *κατὰ σάρκα*, *i.e.* the earthly and visible part. Later on the Fathers of the Church borrowed from the Jew Philo the distinction between the *interior word*, *λόγος ἐνδιάθετος*, and the *uttered word*, *λόγος προφορικός*; and thus, little by little, Platonic or Aristotelian philosophy made its entrance into the Church and got mixed up with its creed. This, however, did not please St. Irenæus, who in several places of his works complains that “frivolous talk (*minutiloquium*) and subtilty of disputation, being of Aristotelian origin, they [the heretics] try to bring into the faith” (*Contra Hæc.*, lib. iii. cap. xiv. § 2).

It is not, therefore, preposterous to say that all Churches, whether or not in communion with Rome, have even now *one faith in the Lord*, *i.e.* they all believe Him to be true God and true Man, which is

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what St. Paul, in this verse, requires the faithful to believe. Nothing more.

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” One baptism. This is absolutely in favour of a wider conception of the Church. Since the controversy between St. Cyprian and Pope Stephen about the validity of baptism conferred by heretics, all the Christian world holds that their baptism is valid. There is therefore *one baptism only*, the baptism of the Lord: the baptism that enlists a Christian in the army of the Church. This is the official doctrine of the Roman and of the universal Church.

The inference is obvious and may be stated in the very words of St. Cyprian: “If the baptism conferred by heretics is valid, then heresy, as well as the Catholic Church, brings forth children to Christ.” St. Cyprian stopped here, but we may go further: “Therefore Christ is abiding in any single Church which confesses His divinity and bestows His baptism.” Therefore that Church, although not in actual communion with the Church of Rome, is a part of the true Church of Christ, is a true branch of the Vine, the Body and Bride

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of Christ. Take, for instance, the Greek, the Oriental, and the Russian Churches. All these Churches, as granted by Rome, have valid orders, and in consequence have valid sacraments. They validly baptize, validly administer the sacrament of Penance, validly consecrate the Body and the Blood of the Lord, validly ordain for the holy priesthood, and, finally, are validly recognised as channels of divine grace. What more is wanted to make them parts and living branches of the true Church of Christ? If communion with Rome and submission to the Pope were essential to the Church, they would not be Churches at all: they would be dead, not living Churches. If Peter were the only necessary rock of the Church, those Churches, not founded on Peter, could not stand. If Peter were the only fountain through which Christ's grace flows, they would be without grace. If in the house of Peter only one could eat the Pascal Lamb, they would be long dead of starvation. And yet they are living. There is no gainsaying this.

And what I say of the Greek and Roman Churches must be said in like manner of all other communions who believe in the

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Lord, worship Him as God, and rightly confer His holy baptism. They are all and each of them living branches of the one true Church of Christ. They may differ amongst themselves in beauty, in vitality, in perfection, in fruitfulness; but they are all branches of the same vine, and Jesus Christ is the hidden root of them all, thus verifying His word: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20), and the right inference of St. Ignatius Martyr, "Where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church" (*Ubi Christus ibi Catholica est Ecclesia*).

Finally, the proper unity of the Church is to be looked for especially in the invisible Church. Those that see the true and universal Church of Christ in the invisible Church only are at no loss to discover her wonderful unity and divine organisation. For it is clear that the true children of God worship the same God and Father of all, profess the same faith in our Lord, share in the same Baptism of Christ, and partake of the same heavenly bread.

Of course, when laying stress upon the invisibility of the Church, I do not mean

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to discredit the visible Church and the importance of belonging to it. As a matter of fact, the invisible Church cannot exist without the visible Church, and the latter is properly our home, our school, our nursery, our Church on earth. I bring forward the theory of the invisibility of the true Church of Christ only to state that, as the true Church of Christ is primarily and essentially a spiritual unity, so the unity of the Church is primarily and essentially a spiritual unity. This spiritual unity is "kept" by all Evangelical Churches, which are thereby entitled to be called true parts and branches of the universal Church of God. It is a real and present unity—that of the true members of Christ in all the different Churches, who are really one by faith in Him. This is the Body of Christ on earth, and to this Church, which we perceive by faith rather than by sight, we apply all those passages and promises of Scripture which might otherwise seem to lack fulfilment.

CHAPTER III

IS PETER THE ROCK AND CENTRE OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT ?

FROM what I have hitherto said it is evident that the words of St. Paul to the Ephesians, if they prove anything, vindicate rather the position of the Churches not in communion with Rome than that of Rome itself. The weakness of their own argument drawn from St. Paul has not escaped the Roman divines, who accordingly make little account of the apostle's text, and repair more willingly to the much-quoted words of our Lord to St. Peter: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church" (Matt. xvi. 13-19). On the strength of these words the Church of Rome claims for its supreme pastor the primacy of jurisdiction over the universal Church, making him at the same time the rock

upon which the Church rests, the centre of Church government, the infallible teacher of all the faithful, the source of all ecclesiastical power, and, finally, the Vicar of Christ. The arguments whereby Roman divines prove their thesis are too well known to be repeated here. They explain the meaning of the promise made by Jesus to Peter. They confirm their meaning by the testimony of the early Fathers; they add such philosophic and theological arguments as are more or less closely related to it, and to the sense they attach to the text. Anyhow the thesis of the Primacy of the Pope is essentially a Biblical one as regards its alleged basis.

Now, they assert that Jesus, by the word "rock," meant not Himself, nor the Church, nor the apostles collectively taken, nor the objective faith of St. Peter, *i.e.* the doctrine of the divinity of Christ which Peter confessed, but the very person of St. Peter himself, none else. They say that Christ, to all intent and purposes, thus spoke to Peter: "Thou art a rock, and upon thee, as upon a most solid rock, I will build My Church." Hence they infer that the claims of Rome are of divine appointment.

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On the contrary, I maintain that Jesus, by the word "rock," meant the objective faith of St. Peter, or his confession "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This is the most obvious interpretation; it is that which receives the support of most Fathers of the Church; it is admitted by all Churches; it responds to the real Church, as it includes the great communion of the faithful who do not pay allegiance to the Pope of Rome; and finally, it is indeed the immutable rock on which the Church will stand for ever and ever.

And observe that this opinion in no way contradicts those divines who hold, with Tertullian, that the "rock" is Peter, because our Lord used St. Peter's ministry in laying the foundation of the Church amongst the Jews and the Gentiles, by ordering him to preach, first of the apostles, to them, and to baptize them. This view of the text is not opposed to my own, but rather perfects it, and in no case, moreover, is it favourable to the claims of Rome. In fact, if we accept the interpretation which Tertullian gives to our text we are forced to say, with him, that Christ bestowed on St. Peter a personal privilege

which in no way passed to his successors in the Roman See.

But let us examine the text itself, and, in the first place, in its exegetical aspect. It must be acknowledged that, at first sight, the Roman interpretation of Christ's words sounds plausible enough. In fact it is, so to say, the literal interpretation. Peter is the rock pointed out by Christ, and upon him the Church is founded. The ancient Fathers of the Church, who in their writings referred to St. Matthew's text, called Peter the rock and foundation of the Church. This must be granted as absolutely true. Amongst such early Fathers are St. Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, St. Cyprian, St. Hippolytus, Eusebius of Cæsarea, and a few others, till we arrive at the time of St. Hilary of Poitiers. But three things are to be remarked here. First of all, most of those Fathers attribute to St. Peter the name of rock *en passant*, by the way, and nothing more. They accept the word of our Lord literally and as it sounds to the ear, but they do not explain it. In the second place, others like Tertullian, Cyprian, Firmilian, and Origen, whilst they grant that Peter is the rock meant by Christ,

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so far from deducing from it the Roman claims, in words and deeds contradict them. The words and deeds of those four doctors are too well known to be reported here. A few of them will find their place later on. Thirdly, when the Fathers set themselves deliberately to comment on the word "rock," as used by Christ of Peter, they were almost forced by the evidence of the case to admit that the rock meant by Christ was not the actual person of Peter, but the faith confessed by him, or He whom Peter confessed. The first Father who, as it seems, deliberately studied our text is St. Hilary of Poitiers, who states clearly and beyond any doubt that the rock of which Christ spoke is the objective faith, or the confession, of Peter. Other Fathers after him held the same opinion, so that it became very common, if not universal. In fact, the majority of the Fathers can be reckoned to be in its favour. Amongst them ranks also the illustrious St. Augustine, who in his book *De Retractionibus*, lib. i. n. 21, narrates of himself that in his youth he had explained the word "rock" as meaning the person of Peter; but later on he had adopted that interpretation

of St. Leo in his time, which taught the rock to be the confession of Peter, or his objective faith.

The vacillation of the early Fathers in the interpretation of St. Matthew's text can be accounted for in this way: that when the Fathers assert of Peter that he is the "rock" referred to by Christ, they think of Matthew's text only; whereas, when they apply themselves deliberately to comment on it, they are forced to take into account other passages of Scripture, wherein it is said that the other apostles also, no less so than Peter, are the foundation of the Church; that they also were granted "the power of binding and loosing"; and finally that Christ, and Christ alone, is the chief corner-stone of the whole building (Ephes. ii. 20, *cf.* 1 Pet. ii. 4 f., 1 Cor. iii. 11).

These assertions of Holy Writ agree quite well with the theory that the rock meant by Christ is the objective faith of Peter; because, as Peter's faith was the faith also of the other apostles, just as the Church is founded on him, it is no less founded on them. Jesus is, moreover, the chief corner-stone, because whom did Peter confess but

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Jesus, the Son of the living God? I know Roman divines try to ward off this difficulty by saying that Peter is the *chief* foundation, the other apostles *secondary ones*. But, in the name of common sense, who ever heard of principal and secondary foundations? A stone is, or is not, a foundation-stone. If it be not laid at the very bottom of the building, it cannot properly lay claim to the title of foundation-stone. Therefore, the rock meant by Jesus is Peter's confession, or his faith in Christ, the Son of the living God.

But let us not anticipate. I have said that the Roman interpretation of the words of Christ appears plausible; but if one analyses the conception involved in the word "rock," as applied to the person of St. Peter, its absurdity becomes manifest. In effect, the rock of which Christ speaks is a moral, not a material rock. St. Peter's person, therefore, cannot be taken materially, but spiritually. Jesus is not going to found His Church on the body of a living man, as oriental nations before Christ were wont to do, when raising a public building. They buried a living man under the foundations, so as to propitiate the spirits of the land

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for the protection of the new house. This custom has survived in India even to our own days, especially with regard to new bridges. Likewise, the Church is taken by Christ to mean a moral body of men, a society, a congregation of human beings, not a material building. The Church therefore must, on the Roman supposition, be reared, not on the body, but on the soul of Peter, *i.e.* not on his material, but on his spiritual qualities or faculties. Which of the faculties of Peter will stand as a rock to the Church of Christ? The will, or the mind? Peter's will must certainly be excluded, because it is Christ that willed to found a Church, not Peter; in fact, when Peter is requested to admit the Gentiles into the Church, *i.e.* to raise the Church of Christ amongst the Gentiles, he hesitates, he doubts, and must be encouraged to the great work by a heavenly vision. The Church of Christ must, therefore, rest on the mind of Peter. But how? Has Peter conceived and planned the Church? Has Peter given it laws, and, so to say, its Magna Charta or constitution? Who will say so? And yet, if it rests at all on Peter,

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it must rest on something that belongs to the mind of Peter. What is this? If I err not, it is nothing else but Peter's act of faith, whereby he said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." In this all Roman theologians agree, because, as they say, the Church rests on Peter, *i.e.* Peter is a rock, *propter fidem ejus*, on account of his faith. And so far, so good. But further on I differ from them. They say that the rock is the *subjective* faith of Peter; I say, on the contrary, that it is the *objective* faith of Peter, not the subjective. The reader will easily understand that by the subjective faith the *personal act of faith of Peter* is understood; whereas by objective faith we mean *the doctrine itself* which Peter believed. The former is expressed by Peter in the words, "Thou art," the act of asserting; the latter by the assertion itself: "The Christ, the Son of the living God."

Here I wish to call the attention of the reader to a very important, yet too often disregarded, notion. It is this. A society cannot rest on a man. It must be founded on a Magna Charta, on a set of rules, on

statutes, on laws, on enactments. Nothing can bind men together into a corporation but common laws. This truth is so trite that I am half ashamed of wasting time over it. What form is to matter, statutes are to a society. Laws are the binding force of society. Even in the case of slaves submitting to their lord, the lord's law is their law, and thereby they constitute a society—an inferior society, if you will, but a society. Now, the subjective faith of Peter, being a personal act, is not and cannot be an incorporating force. It remains in Peter, it does not go out of him; it disappears with him; it is his glory, his happiness, the cause of his reward, but it cannot be a Magna Charta for his followers, for the worshippers of Christ. The personal act of Peter cannot be a law, a statute, an enactment, and therefore cannot be the rock, eternal, unchangeable, immovable, upon which the Lord intends building His Church. But the objective faith of Peter may well be the rock described by our Lord. The recognition and profession of the divinity of Christ is the Magna Charta of Christendom. Christ, the Son of the living God, is the

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centre of the Church, the alpha and omega of Christianity. To believe in Him, as God, is the absolute condition of Christian life. This judgment, this profession, contains in germ all Christian doctrine, because all Christian doctrine springs forth from the Incarnate God, centres in Him and reverts to Him. The Incarnation is the birth in time of the Son of the living God. The Trinity is the eternal birth of the same Son of the living God. The redemption is the love of Jesus for mankind. The Church is the kingdom, the household, the family, the bride of the Son of the living God. The sacred rites of worship are the channels through which flows the grace of the Son of the living God. In short, everything can be traced back to the profession of the divinity of the Son of the living God. On the contrary, if this belief falls, there are no Church, no Sacraments, no Trinity, no Christianity. The Christian faith is dead.

Hence the text of St. Matthew may, according to this view, be thus paraphrased: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this truth unto thee, but My Father which is in

heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon the truth by thee professed, as upon a solid rock, I will build My Church: and the gates of hell, [*i.e.* errors and sins] shall not prevail against it." By "the gates of hell" most of the Greek Fathers, and many also of the Latin Church, understood vices, sins, errors, and heresies. Now this promise of the Lord can be verified by history, because the Eastern Church never rejected the divinity of Christ; much less so did the Church of Rome. Even when Arianism was predominant in the East, the divinity of Christ was never openly denied, although His divine relations with the Father were for a time misunderstood. If the text holds good for the person of Peter and his successors, I ask, did not the gates of hell prevail against the Church of Rome during the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries? If not then, certainly never!

But they say: These two, the objective faith of Peter and his subjective faith, are not really two, but one only. You have no right to distinguish between Peter and his faith. These two make but one Peter.

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Jesus founded His Church upon *the believing Peter, upon Peter, a man of faith*. I answer, the two theories are really two, not one. They appeared to be two to St. Augustine, who discriminated between them and left his readers the choice of either of them: “Harum autem duarum sententiarum quæ sit probabilior eligat lector.” It is true that when I say that the rock meant by Christ is the objective faith of Peter, I include the person of Peter in my concept; but it takes a secondary, not the principal, place in it. Philosophers would say here that Peter enters into my concept *in obliquo*, in an indirect way; the faith of Peter *in recto*, in a direct way. To explain my meaning, take, for instance, the Institute of M. Pasteur in Paris, for dealing with rabies. Upon what is it founded? Is it founded on the person, or on the theory, of M. Pasteur? Surely on his theory. M. Pasteur is dead, but his theory still lives after him, and upon it rest all the institutes for rabies all the world over. If, twenty years hence, experience and science were to prove Pasteur’s theory false, useless, and mistaken, the institutes would soon fall into neglect, and would be

finally forgotten. Pasteur's great fame and name could not possibly save one of them. In like manner, Peter is dead, but his objective faith, *i.e.* his faith in the divinity of Christ, lives after him and supports the Church as a solid foundation. If to-morrow the world were to cease to believe in Christ as God, what would the Church come to?

Again, they say that our interpretation of the text is not natural, as the obvious meaning of the text requires that the rock referred to by Christ should be Peter and none else. My answer is, that the obvious sense of the text requires that the rock should be something appertaining to Peter I readily grant. That it should be a personal and transient act of Peter, such as his subjective faith is, I deny. Moreover, I remark here that St. Matthew's text contains a metaphor which tends to merge into an allegory. Now it is in the nature of such figures of speech to say one thing that another may be understood. *Unum dicitur et aliud intelligitur.* Finally, I can hardly abstain from remarking, that it is simply a thing wonderful, mysterious, scarcely comprehensible, how our Lord should choose to give to His Church one of the most

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important points of His doctrine under the dark veil of a metaphor, difficult and obscure.

But Roman divines will not be content yet. They insist that Christ could not, by the rock, mean Peter's objective faith or confession, because "rock" is nowhere in Scripture used as a symbol for faith. Let it be so: what then? Could not Christ use a new symbol for faith? Was there not an occasion when the Bible epithets were first used? Surely this difficulty is not worthy of the pen of Dr. Murray. Will anybody affirm that "rock," as a metaphor, does not harmonise well with the strength of faith?

Others say that if Jesus meant by the word "rock" Peter's confession, our text does not run smoothly, but its sense becomes forced and unnatural. Is that really so? First of all, I say that it is rather dangerous to speak of smooth sense and obvious reading in a text difficult in itself and obscure. I answer, in the second place, that in my own opinion the text in question, interpreted as I think it ought to be, reads better and more naturally. Well, I suppose everybody will grant that in verse 17 we must supply the object of the

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verb "reveal," the sense of the "it" of common translations. Now, all admit that it is "thy confession"; "thy faith in My divinity"; "that I am the Christ, the Son of the living God." All these sentences are equivalent to one another. This taken for granted, I thus arrange my text: "17. Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed to thee *thy confession* . . . but, etc. 18. And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock *of thy confession* I will build My Church. . . ." True, the words in italics, *of thy confession*, in verse 18 are not to be found in the Gospel; but neither are those of verse 17. We can properly assume them in the first place; why not also in the second? Is not the reading rational, natural, and smooth? Is not the correlation between the two verses perfect? Who can ask of a writer or a preacher that in a figure of speech he should express everything explicitly?

However, they will still insist, "Why these nice distinctions about the words of Christ? Metaphors are to be taken in the mass, not in such a discriminating way. Jesus makes use of the metaphor of a house to

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be built, the foundation of which is the principle both of its unity and of its solidity. Jesus says that Peter is the foundation-stone of His Church; and by that He means that in His Church, which is the society of the faithful, the authority of its chief is at the same time the principle of the unity and the reason of the stability of the Church." To this difficulty I answer, first, that the foundation-stone of a house does not consist of one stone only. This is too evident to need be proved. The foundations of the Church consist of many stones, and St. Paul accordingly teaches us that "the Church of Christ is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Ephes. ii. 20; *cf.* iv. 11). Truly St. Paul favours rather a broad than a narrow conception of the Church! In the second place, I reject the notion that the unity and solidity of the building rest only on its foundation. Daily experience shows just the reverse. Raise, for instance, upon granite foundations a building with mud walls, and in a short time you will realise its unity and stability! The fact is, that a strong and sound foundation is one condition of the unity and solidity of the

building; not the only one. And here likewise St. Paul sides with those that uphold a broader conception of the Church, in that he says that "the building" of the Church, being fitly framed together in Jesus, the chief Corner-stone (not in the Pope), groweth up into an holy temple in the Lord (Ephes. ii. 20, 21). Finally, I reject the assertion that the authority, or the faculty of jurisdiction, resident in the head of any society, is the binding force and the principle of unity in it. It is quite true, authority must not be wanting; but the laws and rules of conduct and action for the members, in correlation with the end of the society, are far more necessary. If the Pasteur theory and its serum are proved false and useless, there is no President of the Pasteur Institute that will save it from destruction. Pasteur himself would be powerless. Would not this fate be shared by the Church, if Christ were to be proved an impostor?

So far we have discoursed on the text itself, apart from any detailed consideration of the way in which the early Fathers of the Church interpreted it. Let us now pass on to examine this latter point.

CHAPTER IV

THE FATHERS AND ECCLESIASTICAL WRITERS OF THE CHURCH ON ST. PETER

I HAVE before me three different books of Roman Catholic theology: one by an Italian, another by a French, and a third by a German author; all of them are conceived and laid out on the same plan: *ab uno disce omnes*.

After the so-called Scriptural proof, they quote the Fathers to prove that they held Peter to be the rock meant by Christ upon which the Church was to be built. "Prob. II. Ex. Patribus; Patres docent B. Petrum esse petram, super quam Ecclesia fundata est." And they quote Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzen, Epiphanius, John Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and others of less account.

Now, it is quite true that all these Fathers,

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and many others, say often, in passing words, that the Church is built on Peter, and that Peter is the rock; but it is not less true that the same Fathers held at other times that the rock was Jesus, or that it was the confession made by St. Peter.

At the time of the Vatican Council a book was published under the title *Quæstio*, which examined very carefully the opinions of the Fathers of the Church upon our subject; and it found that eight Fathers interpreted the word "rock" as all the apostles collectively taken; sixteen took it as meaning Christ Himself; seventeen applied it to St. Peter, and forty-four interpreted it as the faith which Peter confessed: "Quadragesima quatuor ea verba explicant *de fide* quam confessus est Petrus."¹

I have by me the Very Rev. J. Waterworth's book, *A Commentary by Writers of the First Five Centuries on the Place of St. Peter in the New Testament*. London: Thomas Richardson, 1871. I take my quotations from him, because he is beyond suspicion. In his book I see quoted a great number of Fathers and writers in support of

¹ *Apud* Hurter, S.J., *Theologiæ Dogmaticæ Compendium*, Tract III., De Primatu, Thesis lxxi., nota.

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the word "rock" as applied to Peter; but it is necessary to observe that all of them do so in passing remarks, not on purpose and by design, repeating as it were mechanically the words of Jesus: "Thou art a rock, and upon this rock I will build My Church." This word, to them, is a mere adjective which they bestow on Peter, just as our Lord did. The same Fathers and writers, however, whenever they happen to inquire into the meaning of the word "rock," as applied to Peter, uphold either (*a*) that the true rock is Christ; or (*b*) that St. Peter was called Rock because he was entrusted with the foundation of the Church, *i.e.* because he, first of all, opened the gates of the Church to the Jews and the Gentiles; or (*c*) because, from the first Church founded by him at Jerusalem, all other Churches are derived; or (*d*) finally, because the Church is founded upon the profession of faith by him uttered, on which faith, as upon a solid rock, the Church was for ever founded.

In Mgr. Waterworth's collection I see that over thirty Fathers and writers of the first five centuries call Peter a rock; many of whom, however, add explanations of their

meaning in other parts of their works. A greater number of them call Jesus a rock, although not so as to exclude St. Peter, as a secondary rock, or foundation, of the Church. A few, as St. Asterius (p. 78), St. Maximus (139), Firmilian (30), Tertullian (8), St. Innocent I. (135), St. Boniface (137), St. Gregory Nazianzen (61), and perhaps others, held the second and third meanings of the word "rock" referred to above; others, as St. Basil (69), Origen (14), and St. Jerome (110) say that the Church was built on Peter, but not to the exclusion of all the other apostles; and finally, about twenty profess explicitly our opinion, *i.e.* that the Church was founded on the rock of the faith professed by Peter, when he said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The reader may read, if he has a wish, St. Epiphanius (p. 67), St. Augustine (125, 128, 130), St. John Chrysostom (85, 90), St. Athanasius (50), St. Hilary of Poitiers (44, 45), St. Ambrose (71, 72, 76), Origen (13), Theodoret (152), St. Cyril of Alexandria (143), Tertullian (6), Victor of Antioch (133), Palladius (133), Cassian (155), Paul Eme-senus (156), St. Leo, Pope (157, 158, 160, 162),

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St. Gelasius, Pope (170), to whom he may add the following, not mentioned by Mgr. Waterworth: St. Gregory of Nyssa; Juvenal of Jerusalem; St. Peter Chrysologus; St. Eucherius; Felix III., Pope; Pope Hormisdas; Anastasius Sinaita; St. Gregory the Great; St. Isidore of Seville; St. Bede; St. John Damascenus; Pope Adrian I., and others.

Of all these passages I shall quote only a few to show that, when the Fathers discoursed on and analysed the concept involved in the word "rock," as applied to Peter, they necessarily fell in with the interpretation I here defend, *i.e.* that the rock on which the Church rests is the objective faith in Jesus, the Son of the living God. Thus Christ is the Rock, the foundation, the God-Man, and on Him, and on faith in Him, stands the Church strong and immovable, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Souls are continually being joined on, by the work of the Holy Ghost, and in this way the Church is ever being built on the living Rock, Christ, the Son of the living God.¹

¹ The original text of the Fathers that I am going to quote may be found in Gallandius, *Bibl. Veter. Patr.* (Venet., 1765), or in the Migne edition.

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ORIGEN: *Comment in Matt.* tom. xii. n. 9, 10, 11, pp. 522-6. "But if we have also said, as Peter, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God' [*i.e.* if we believe in the divinity of Jesus],¹ not as having been revealed to us by 'flesh and blood,' but because the light has shone upon our hearts from 'the Father in heaven,' we become Peter; then may be said to us by the Word, 'Thou art Peter,' and the rest. For every disciple of Christ is 'a rock,' of which they drank who 'drank of the spiritual rock that followed them' (1 Cor. x. 4); and upon every such rock every ecclesiastical word (*logos*) is built, and the conversation that is in accordance with it. For in each one of the perfect who have the assemblage of the words that make up the blessedness of words, and of works, and of thoughts [*i.e.* the active faith comprising good thoughts, words, and works] is the Church that is built up by God. But if thou thinkest that on that Peter alone the whole Church is built by God, what wilt thou say concerning John, 'that son of thunder,' or each one of the apostles? Besides, shall we dare to say that against Peter individually

¹ The words in the text included in brackets are mine.

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the 'gates of hell shall not prevail,' but against the rest of the apostles and perfect men they shall prevail? But do not that saying, 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it,' and that other: 'Upon this rock I will build My Church,' both happen to all and each of them? And are then 'the keys of heaven' given by the Lord to Peter alone, and shall no other of the blessed receive them? But if 'I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven' is common also to the others, how not also all the things spoken before, and those spoken after, as if addressed to Peter? . . . " (Waterworth, *Comm.* pp. 13, 14).

Origen, in this text, demonstrates (a) that Christ spoke to all the apostles in the person of Peter, and to all and each perfect Christian. (b) All the apostles; and each perfect disciple of Christ, is a rock. (c) On him, therefore, the Church is being built by God. (d) The rock, finally and strictly speaking, is "the assemblage of the words that make up the blessedness of words, and of works, and of thoughts" [*i.e.* faith and the practice of the Christian life].

ST. HILARY OF POITIERS: *De Trinitate*, vi. 36, 37, p. 160-61. "And the Father, by saying,

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‘This is My Son’ (Matt. xvii. 5), revealed to Peter to say, ‘Thou art the Son of God’; because in that it is said, ‘This is,’ there is the discovery of one that reveals; whilst in that this answer is given, ‘Thou art,’ there is the acknowledgment of one that confesses. *Upon this rock, then, of the confession is the building of the Church; through this faith are ‘the gates of hell’ unavailing against her. This faith has ‘the keys of the kingdom of heaven.’* This faith, ‘whatsoever it binds or looses on earth, is bound or loosed in heaven’” (p. 44). (The italics are mine.)

ST. EPIPHANIUS: *Adversus Hæres., Cathar.* 59, n. 7, 8, p. 500. “And the blessed Peter, who for a while denied the Lord, Peter, who was the very chief of the apostles, who became unto us truly a firm rock, founding the faith of the Lord, *upon which the Church was in every way built*; first in that he confessed Christ, the Son of the living God, and heard that *upon this rock of secure faith ‘I will build My Church,’* because he had openly confessed Him the true Son . . .” (pp. 66, 67).

ST. AMBROSE: *De Incarnatione*, cap. iv. n. 30, 32, 33, cap. v. n. 34, pp. 710–11. “Thou art

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silent, Simon; and, though the rest reply, thou art silent still, whereas thou art the first; who even when not asked, didst ask. He, then, who was silent before . . . when he heard, 'But whom say you that I am?' at once, not unmindful of his own place, exercised [acted] a primacy: a primacy, to wit, of *confession, not of honour; a primacy of faith, not of order*. That is to say: Let no one now surpass me; now it is my part; I must make compensation for that I was silent. . . . This, then, is that Peter for the rest of the apostles; yea, above the rest; and is therefore called the foundation, because he knew how not only to sustain his own, but also that of all [*commune*]. Him Christ approved; to him the Father revealed. For he who speaks of the true generation of the Father, has received it of the Father, not of the flesh. *Faith, therefore, is the foundation of the Church, for, not of the flesh of Peter, but of his faith*, was it said that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it'; but the confession vanquished hell. And this confession has shut out more than one heresy; for whereas the Church, like a good ship, is often buffeted by many waves, the foundation

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of the Church ought to hold good against all heresies ” (pp. 75-6).

ST. ATHANASIUS: *In Ps. cxviii.*, p. 1191, Migne. “In Thy saints, who in every age have been well pleasing to Thee, is truly Thy faith; for, *Thou hast founded the Church on Thy faith*, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”¹

And *Epist. I. ad Serapionem*, n. 28: “It is necessary, moreover, to examine with care and accuracy into the old doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church, which the Lord revealed, which was preached by the apostles and preserved by the Fathers. For, *in that doctrine and tradition the Church is founded*, from which, if one fails, he cannot be any more called Christian, nor is he such in any way ” (p. 50).

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM: *On Matt. xvi.* n. 1. “What, then, says Christ? Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee . . . (n. 2), . . . and I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, that is, *on the faith of the confession* ” (p. 90).

VICTOR OF ANTIOCH: *In Evang. Marci*,

¹ A few manuscripts, instead of *Church*, have *world*.

cap. iii. p. 377. "Because, as Christ the Lord was about to build His Church on Peter, that is, on the unbroken and sound doctrine of Peter and his unshaken faith, therefore, in prophetic spirit He calls him Peter" (pp. 132-3).

ST. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA: *Oratio II. in Isa.*, p. 593. "He said . . . Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will found My Church, calling, I think, the rock, *the immovableness in the faith of the disciple*. It is said also somewhere by the voice of the Psalmist, 'Its foundations are upon the holy mountains.' Exceeding well are the holy apostles and evangelists likened to mountains, *as their knowledge is established as a foundation to those after them*" (p. 143).

"Christ saying, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, etc., calling, I think, a rock, allusively nothing else but the unshaken and most firm faith of the disciple, *upon which faith, even without danger of failing, the Church of God has been firmly set and founded*, remaining indestructible for ever by the gates of hell" (*Dialog. de Trinitate*, Migne, tom. viii. p. 147).

ST. AUGUSTINE: *Tract. 124 in Joann.* n. 5, p. 2470, i. "Therefore does the Lord say,

‘Upon this rock I will build My Church, because Peter had said : ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ *Upon this rock, therefore, He says, which thou hast confessed, ‘I will build My Church.’* The rock was Christ, upon which foundation Peter also himself was built. ‘For other foundation no man can lay but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus’” (p. 125).

And again, Serm. CCXCV. in *Nat. Apost. Petr. et Pauli*, n. 1-4. “Upon this which thou hast said : ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,’ ‘I will build My Church.’ For thou art Peter (Petrus). So Petrus from Petra, as from Christ Christian” (p. 13).

And lib. i. *Retract.* xxi. 1, pp. 67, 68. “In a certain place [of Augustine’s book against the Epistles of Donatus] I said of the Apostle Peter that on him, as on a rock, the Church was founded; which sense is also sung by the mouth of many in the verses of the most blessed Ambrose, where he says that the cock, *hoc, ipsa petra ecclesiæ, canente, culpam diluit.* But I know that I have since very often so expounded what was said by the Lord, ‘Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church,’ that it should be

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understood *upon Him whom* Peter confessed, saying, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God’; and so Peter, named from this rock, would represent the person of the Church, which is built upon this rock, and received the keys of the kingdom of heaven. For it was not said to him, Thou art Petra (a rock or stone) but Petrus; but the Petra was Christ whom Peter confessed, as the whole Church confesses Him. But let the reader choose whichever of these two senses may be the more probable” (p. 121).

I remark here two things. First, in the opinion of St. Augustine, there are two meanings between which he tells his reader to choose, against what many Roman divines say, that they are one and the same: secondly, if in early youth he expounded our text according to the first meaning, afterwards always and constantly he chose the second.

THEODORET: Epist. LXXVII., *Eulalio*, tom. v. p. 1130. “For this also, Christ our Lord permitted the first of the apostles, *whose confession he had fixed as a kind of groundwork and foundation of the Church*, to be shaken, and to deny; and again raised him up, teaching us by the same two things: not to trust in

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ourselves, and to confirm the wavering” (p. 152).

PAUL EMESEUS: *Hom. de Nativit. (inter Opera S. Cyrilli Alex.)* p. 1437. “Upon this faith, the Church of God was founded; upon this profession, upon this rock, the Lord God placed the foundation of the Church” (p. 156).

ST. LEO, POPE: *Serm. IV. in Natal. Ordin.* cap. i. p. 14. In Migne it is cap. ii. c. (closing words of chap. ii. and beginning of chap. iii. Migne, vol. liv. p. 150). “Christ says: Upon this strength I will raise up an everlasting temple, and the height of My Church, which shall reach to heaven, shall rise on the firmness of this faith. This confession the gates of hell shall not hold; the bonds of death shall not bind; for this word is the word of life” (p. 160).¹

¹ The Ballerini Brothers remark here, against Quesnel, that St. Leo does not speak in this place, and in many others of his sermons, of faith in general, nor of the private faith of Peter, but of that faith which Peter was to preach, and the deposit of which he left to the Roman See and to his successors, with an equal privilege of solidity.” *St. Leonis Magni Opera*, ed. Migne, vol. liv. p. 523. And what the Ballerini brothers say of St. Leo’s words must be equally said of all the Fathers here quoted. No one, indeed, could interpret their words as said of faith in general, nor of the subjective faith of Peter, but of that faith which Peter preached.

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ST. GELASIUS, POPE: *Epist. I. Euphem. Labbé*, iv. p. 1158. "You have read the sentence: Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom. x. 17); that word, that is, which promised that *the gates of hell should never prevail against the confession of the blessed Peter*" (p. 170).

The authors hitherto quoted lived from the third to the sixth century: Tertullian and St. Cyprian will follow in the next chapter, when we deal expressly with the nature of Church unity. For the present, then, I stop here. Only I add a few words about the mediæval doctors of the Church which I take from Mr. W. Denton's commentary on the Gospels for holy days, *Festivals of St. Peter*. After the learned author has brought forward numbers of great commentators of the Middle Ages as witnesses against the modern Roman interpretation of our text, he adds: "I might extend these extracts almost indefinitely, but enough has been cited to show that the modern Roman theory obtains no sanction from the great commentators of the Middle Ages. The authors whom I have quoted are of all ages, from the ninth century to the sixteenth inclusive; they are of all

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countries and conditions of life—saints and cardinals, bishops and priests, seculars and regulars, monks and friars of various orders, Benedictines, Augustinians, Dominicans, Carthusians, and Franciscans—men whose learning is evidenced in every page of their volumes, and whose orthodoxy is unquestioned. In their writings we find the Catholic¹ interpretation of our blessed Lord's words, *Upon this rock I will build My Church*, maintained and illustrated. And certainly such names as Haymo, Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop Ælfric, Peter Damian, Rupertus Tuitensis, St. Bruno Astensis, Cardinal Hugo, Ludolph, Simon de Cassia, Gorranus, Tostatus, Dionysius Carthusianus (*Doctor ecstaticus*), St. Thomas a Villanova, John Arboreus, Faber Stapulensis, Francis Titelmann, John Ferus, and John Soarez, cannot be set aside as either *hæretici* or *imperiti*. I doubt not that it would be an easy matter to quadruple the number of such witnesses ; but it is needless for me to do so. They are a sufficiently imposing cloud of witnesses to the truth, that the Catholic Church, from the first, has ever interpreted those words, *this rock*, of Him who alone is

¹ Not Roman.

alike the Rock of the Church and of the individual believer.”¹

The outcome of the whole testimony, ancient and mediæval, is that if a few interpreted “this rock” as meaning St. Peter, it was not in the present Roman sense at all (at least this has never yet been really proved), and that an overwhelming majority interpreted “this rock” to mean Christ Himself, or the objective faith confessed by St. Peter in Him, the God Incarnate.

Before such a splendid array of ancient and mediæval witnesses against the Roman interpretation of the word “rock,” one may ask, in wonder, why the Fathers of the Vatican Council interpreted it as said solely and exclusively of Peter’s person, and not of his objective faith. The answer is at hand and without possibility of evasion. The majority of the Fathers at the Vatican Council were in the pay of the Pope and entirely under his thumb, or, owing to a very one-sided and deficient education, fanatically and *a priori* convinced of the Pope’s primacy and infallibility. It must never be forgotten that the

¹ Quoted by Arthur Brinckman, *The Controversial Methods of Romanism*, p. 167.

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majority of those prelates was largely made up of Italian Bishops and Apostolic Vicars, wholly dependent on Rome; men, moreover, of little learning, if not altogether ignorant of everything not strictly connected with the Roman theology. But they were a crowd, and with their votes overwhelmed the learned minority which opposed the Pope's unjust claims. The fact is that the Vatican council was not free, and, as such, was no Council at all. But more about this in a proper chapter at the end of this work.

Roman divines, as a fitting conclusion of the Biblical argument in favour of the primacy of the Church of Rome, are fond of massing together all those texts of the New Testament in which St. Peter is spoken of as first of the apostles, or in which some deference is paid to him in preference to all the others. Now, just to be fair and honest, without denying that in a few texts Peter appears as first and chief of the twelve, I shall add here a list of other texts, where he ranks with the apostles in perfect equality, without distinction of absolute supremacy. Therefore, as far as Scriptural evidence goes, it is rather against, than in favour of, modern Romanism.

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THE SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE AGAINST MODERN ROMANISM

St. Matthew

Chap. xxviii. 18 ff. : “ And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go *ye* therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with *you* always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Commission and promise to abide with successors given to all equally.

St. Luke

Chap. xxii. 28 ff. : “ Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint *unto you a kingdom*, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” No appointment of St. Peter as vice-regent or chief ruler.

St. John

Chap. xi. 16 : “ Then said Thomas, which

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is called Didymus, unto his *fellow disciples*,
Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”
All equal.

Chap. xii. 20 ff. : “And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast. The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.” Andrew and Philip approach Jesus directly, and not through St. Peter.

Chap. xv. 26 ff. : “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto *you* from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, ye shall testify of Me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.” No special gift to St. Peter; all equal as witnesses.

Chap. xvi. 13: “Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide *you* into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show *you* things to come.” All to be equally guided by the Holy Spirit.

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Chap. xvii. 21 : “ That they all may be one ; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us : that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.” No great inferiority of rank, as in bishops compared to Popes, but oneness as the Divine Persons are co-equal.

Chap. xx. 22 ff. : “ And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord.” The “ Power of the Keys ” bestowed equally on all. After the events described (Matt. xvi.) the disciples spoken of as equal.

The Acts of the Apostles

Chap. i. 14 : “ These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.”

Chap. ii. 3 : “ And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it

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sat upon each of them." No double portion on St. Peter.

Chap. ii. 42: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Not in St. Peter's doctrine, but all the apostles'.

Chap. iv. 11: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner." St. Peter's own testimony as to who is the Rock.

Chap. vi. 2: "Then *the twelve* called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables." All equal.

Chap. vi. 6: "Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them." All equal.

Chap. viii. 14: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John." Apostles together supreme, not *one* supreme over apostles. St. Peter sent by all.

Chap. ix. 15: "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the

Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.”
St. Paul the apostle of the Gentiles.

Chap. ix. 27: “But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles.” Not to St. Peter.

Chap. xi. 1 ff.: “And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him.” St. Peter not regarded as supreme and infallible.

Chap. xv. 6: “And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.” No appeal to St. Peter.

Chap. xv. 19: “Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.” St. James, not St. Peter, president of the council.

Chap. xv. 23: “And they wrote letters by them after this manner. The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia.” Decree of apostles, not encyclical of St. Peter.

Chap. xvi. 4: “And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees

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for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem." Decrees of apostles, not St. Peter.

Chap. xxii. 10: "And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do." Apostle of the Gentiles not sent to St. Peter, who, therefore, had not supreme power of jurisdiction and mission. If he had, it is difficult to understand why it was not recognised in such a case as this.

Chap. xxviii. 30: "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." St. Paul in Rome; no hint of inferiority to St. Peter, even if the latter were there at the time.

Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans

Chap. i. 5: "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name." If

this had been said by St. Peter, how it would have been twisted into the support of papal claims to absolute obedience !

Chap. i. 15 : “ So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also.” No hint of St. Peter at Rome.

Chap. xv. 20 : “ Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation.” Church at Rome not exclusively founded by St. Peter.

The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians

Chap. i. 12 : “ Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul ; and I of Apollos ; and I of Cephas ; and I of Christ.” St. Peter not named first. The modern Roman sign of true Churchmanship, “ I am of Peter,” is here denounced.

Chap. iii. 11 : “ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” St. Peter not the foundation.

Chap. iii. 22 : “ Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours.” St. Peter not mentioned first.

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Chap. ix 5: "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" St. Peter married, and not mentioned first.

Chap. xii. 28: "And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." First *apostles*, not first St. Peter, or the Bishop of Rome, or a Vicar of Christ.

Chap. xv. 5 ff.: "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: . . . after that He was seen of James; then of all the apostles." St. James and St. Peter mentioned in same terms. All equal.

Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians

Chap. xi. 5: "For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." No hint of St. Peter's supremacy here.

Chap. xi. 28: "Beside those things that are without, and that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." If this had been said by St. Peter!

Chap. xii. 11: "For in nothing am I

behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing." No inferiority to St. Peter.

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians

Chap. i. 19 : " But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." All equal.

Chap. ii. 6 : " But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me : God accepteth no man's person :) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me : but contrariwise, when they saw that the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the Gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter : (for he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles :) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship ; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." All equal. St. Peter's mission not wider than St. Paul's.

Chap. ii. 11 : " But when Peter was come to

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Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." No hint of supremacy and infallibility here.

Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians

Chap. ii. 20 : "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." No mention of St. Peter as the rock on which the Church is built.

Chap. iv. 3 : "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The modern Roman test of unity is submission to Rome.

Chap. iv. 11 ff. : "And he gave some, apostles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." No mention of any Vicar of Christ, sole source of jurisdiction and mission.

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians

Chap. ii. 6 ff. : "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in

Him: rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power." The Christian living and growing in Christ is complete in Him. No mention of any other bond but the mystical union by which we are all united to Christ, and by which He dwells in us by the Holy Spirit.

The First Epistle General of Peter

Chap. i. 1: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." An apostle, not the chief, supreme Apostle, or the Head of the Church, or the Vicar of Christ, but Peter, an apostle.

Chap. ii. 6: "Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded."

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St. Peter's own testimony that Christ is the Rock.

Chap. v. 1 : "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." "Also an elder"; no mention of supreme headship.

The Second Epistle General of Peter

Chap. i. 1 : "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." No allusion to supreme headship.

Chap. iii. 2 : "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." All equal.

The Revelation of St. John the Divine

Chap. xxi. 14 : "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." No mention of one special foundation of one apostle, St. Peter.

CHAPTER V

WHAT TERTULLIAN AND ST. CYPRIAN THOUGHT ABOUT THE CHURCH OF ROME AND ITS BISHOP

IN the preceding chapter I have quoted neither Tertullian nor St. Cyprian. I have reserved them for this place, because they fit in better here. Nor are they two independent witnesses. They are practically one only. St. Cyprian is the pupil, Tertullian the "Master," though not heard always by the former with unreasoning submission. St. Cyprian knows at times how to be independent. Both of them were rhetoricians, very imaginative, men of fervent passions, idealists, with a strong tendency to exaggeration, and born controversialists. St. Cyprian, moreover, was possessed with a strange hankering after unity, which at times seemed akin, not to a religious virtue, but to a very human weakness.

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These two men will tell us what the African Church, between A.D. 150 and 250, thought of church unity. They will explain to us in what sense the Church of Christ is one, how its unity arose, of what elements it is composed, what is the bond that binds together all the particular Churches into one great universal Church, and in what relation the See of Peter stands to the other Churches established by the apostles all over the world.

Now Tertullian, although not always consistent with himself, teaches constantly three things: (a) The Church is one, built on Peter, *i.e. through him*. (b) The Church is one because it is from one original Church and through one original man. (c) The apostolic Churches are, however, at the same time “wombs and originals of the faith.”

“‘Upon thee,’ He says, ‘I will build My Church,’ and, ‘I will give to thee the keys,’ not to the Church; and ‘whatsoever *thou* shalt bind or loose,’ not ‘what *they* shall bind or loose.’ *For so also the event teaches: in him the Church was built; that is, through him: he was the first to use the key. ‘Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man sent of God to you,’ and the rest*

(Acts ii. 22). In short, he unlocked the entrance of the kingdom of heaven in the baptism of Christ, by which offences heretofore bound are loosed and those not loosed are bound according to true salvation" (*De Pudicitia*, n. 21).

“The Church being founded, the apostles scattered themselves through the whole world to preach the same doctrine of the same faith to the Gentile nations, amongst which, afterwards, they established Churches, and from them, later on, all the other Churches borrowed the generation of faith and the seed of doctrine, and they are still now borrowing, that they may be Churches. Hence they are esteemed likewise apostolic, and legitimate offspring of the apostolic Churches. Because every family is to be traced back to its origin. Therefore, *so many and different Churches make but one Church, that first one which was founded by the apostles, from which all others derived.* And so all are the first, and all apostolic, whilst, being all one, they show the unity of the Church, which is manifested also by their communion of peace, by the name of brotherhood, by the mark of hospitality: of all which things there is no other

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reason than that they have the same rule of faith" (*De Præscriptionibus*, cap. xx.).

"Now, what the apostles did preach, that is to say, what Christ revealed unto them, I will here also rule must be found out in no other way than from those same Churches which the apostles themselves founded by preaching to them first *viva voce*, as men say, and afterwards by epistles. If these things be so, it becomes in like degree manifest that all doctrines which agree *with those apostolic Churches, the wombs and originals of the faith*, must be accounted true, as without doubt containing that which the Churches have received from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, Christ from God . . ." (*De Præscrip.* cap. xxi.).

St. Cyprian holds the same doctrine, but he expounds it more clearly and develops it more abundantly.

"Moreover, after all this, a pseudo-bishop having been set up for themselves by heretics, they dare to sail and to carry letters from schismatics and profane persons to the chair of Peter, and the principal Church, *whence the unity of the priesthood took its rise*" (*Epist. ad Cornelium*, n. 18).

"There is one baptism and one Holy Ghost,

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and one Church, founded by Christ the Lord upon Peter, *from the origin and by reason of unity* (Origine unitatis et ratione)” (Epist. LXX., *ad Januar.*).

“The Lord saith to Peter, ‘I say unto thee,’ saith He, ‘that thou art Peter, and upon this rock,’ etc. (Matt. xvi. 18, 19). To him, again, after His resurrection, He says, ‘Feed My sheep.’ Upon him, *being one*, He builds His Church; and though He gives to all the apostles an equal power, and says, “As the Father sent Me, even so I send you; receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit,’ etc., yet, *in order to manifest unity*, He has, by His own authority, so placed the source of the same unity as *to begin from one*. Certainly, the other apostles were what Peter was, *endued with an equal fellowship, both of honour and power*; but a commencement is made *from unity*, that the Church may be set before us as one” (*de Unitate*, p. 393. Oxford translation).

“For what quarrels and dissensions hast thou [Pope Stephen] provoked through the Churches of the whole world? And how great sin hast thou heaped up for thyself when thou didst cut thyself off from so many

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flocks? For thou didst cut thyself off: deceive not thyself: for he is truly the schismatic who has made himself an apostate *from the communion* of the unity of the Church” (Epist. LXXV., Firmilian to Cyprian).

From the passages of Tertullian and of Cyprian hitherto quoted we may draw the following inferences, disregarding now the episcopalianism of the two African doctors, which they both held and taught.

(a) Christ, according to these two authors, placed all alike the apostles and their successors on the same level.

(b) Yet, to indicate the oneness or the unity of the commission or charge He gave them, *first He addressed Peter alone*. “Ad Petrum locutus est Dominus, ad unum, id est ut unitatem fundaret ex uno, mox idipsum in commune præcipiens” (*ad Pacianum*, Epist. III. cap. xi.)

(c) The authority of every bishop is perfect in itself and independent, yet not forming with all other bishops a mere agglomeration of powers, but being a tenure upon a totality, like that of a shareholder in some joint property. “Episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur.”

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(d) The tangible bond of the Church's unity is *her one united episcopate*, the profession of the same faith in Jesus Christ, the same sacraments, the same spiritual end.

(e) The Church is one, also, because it first came from one, *i.e.* through Peter, and sprang from one Church, the Church of Jerusalem. "There is one Church which spreads itself out into a multitude of Churches, wider and wider in every increasing fruitfulness; just as the sun has many rays, but one only light, and a tree many branches, yet one only heart, based in the clinging root."

"The Lord," says St. Augustine, "has placed the foundation of the Church in the apostolic sees (*Dominus fundamenta Ecclesiæ in apostolorum sedibus collocavit*)."¹ "And each Church must attach itself to the root of the apostolic sees (*ad radices apostolicarum sedium*)."¹ And St. Irenæus: "This is the voice of that Church [the Church of Jerusalem] from which each Church took its rise: this is the voice of the great city, the city of the citizens of the New Testament," etc.²

¹ St. Augustini, *Contra litteras Petiliani*, lib. ii. cap. 51.

² St. Irenæi, *Adv. Hær.* lib. iii. cap. xii. n. 195, ed. Migne.

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(“ Hæc voces Ecclesiæ ex qua habuit omnis Ecclesia initium ”).

(*f*) The form of government for the whole Church is that of a body, *i.e.* a representative body. It is, therefore, a practical unity, a moral unity, held together by “ the cement of mutual concord.”

(*g*) The single Churches are perfect in themselves and independent, because they sprang from the apostolic Churches, “ the wombs and the originals of the faith ”; yet all together do not make many Churches, but one Church only, because the first declaration of the foundation of a universal Church is couched in language addressed to one only—St. Peter.

(*h*) Accordingly, as “ that body may not rule any one bishop,” so, *a fortiori*, any one bishop may not rule that body.

(*i*) Therefore no one may style himself “ Pontifex maximus et Episcopus episcoporum,” as all bishops are equal amongst themselves, both in honour and power.

(*k*) Hence the universal Church is a great republic of Churches, and to no particular Church did Christ grant the power of jurisdiction over all the rest. In this, the univer-

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sal Church possesses a government *sui generis*, the like of which does not exist amongst purely human societies. The Government that approaches most nearly to that of the Church is the Government of the United States, or that of a company of shareholders in some joint property.

(l) Peter, according to the two African doctors, being the one apostle to whom the commission to found the Church was firstly given, and the head of the Church of Jerusalem, from which all other Churches derived, enjoys a certain primacy amongst the other bishops of the Catholic Church: He is *primus inter pares*, and his Church is *Ecclesia principalis*.

(m) After the death of St. Peter, who from an episcopalian point of view may be regarded as Bishop of Jerusalem and, till the death of James, his successor in that see, and after the dispersion of the same Church to Pella, Christians looked upon the Church of Jerusalem as the *Ecclesia principalis*, the *matrix* and *radix unitatis*; and very significant is the inscription of the apocryphal letter of Clement, Bishop of Rome, to James, Bishop of Jerusalem, in which the former

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informs the latter of the death of Peter and of his own election. "Clement to James, the Lord's brother, and *Bishop of bishops*, and who rules Jerusalem, the holy Church of the Hebrews, and the Churches everywhere excellently founded by the Providence of God, with the elders and deacons and the rest of the brethren, peace be always."¹ The letter was written between 200 and 230 A.D. and is, of course, apocryphal ; but it shows a certain inclination in the early Christians to attach a certain pre-eminence to the Church from which all others had descended. But, as the Church at Jerusalem broke up very soon, so in the course of time, for very human reasons, Rome came to be the *Ecclesia principalis*, the *sedes apostolica*, the *radix et matrix unitatis*. It was a natural development, of which Tertullian and Cyprian are two of the earliest witnesses, nothing more.

"The term *principalis Ecclesia* given by Cyprian to the Church of Rome, defined indeed her position among Churches. She is first and highest in a great republic of Churches, possessing a general pre-eminence as distinct

¹ Cf. Dr. Gerardus Rauschen *Manuale di Patrologia*, p. 39 ; *S. Clementis I., Rom. Pont. Opera Dubiæ*, tom. ii. p. 31.

from a special function, a constitutional pre-eminence as opposed to despotic rule. Also St. Augustine lays stress on the principate of the Church of Rome. In effect, he writes as follows to Glorius Eleusius (Epistle XLIII.): ‘Romanæ Ecclesiæ in qua semper apostolicæ cathedræ viguit principatus,’ and urges the Donatists to submit to the judgment of Pope Melchiades and his colleagues the bishops, given on appeal at Rome (s. 14). Nevertheless, he points out that, supposing that Roman judgment to be wrong, there was still an appeal to a general Council, which might reconsider and reverse the judgment of the Pope and bishops: ‘Ecce putemus illos episcopos, qui Romæ judicarunt, non bonos judices fuisse: restabat adhuc plenarium universæ Ecclesiæ Concilium, ubi etiam cum ipsis iudicibus causa posset agitari, ut si male iudicasse convicti essent, eorum sententiæ solverentur’ (s. 19). That distinctly expresses the nature of principatus. It was not, strictly speaking, ‘sovereign’ in its decisions, great as was the respect paid to them.”¹

The reader may have remarked that I gave

¹ Archbishop Benson, *Cyprian: his Life, his Times, his Work*. Appendix A. p. 539. London, 1897.

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the most beautiful extract of Cyprian's treatise on the Unity of the Church according to the Oxford translation. I did so in order to leave out the shameful Roman interpolations of the same passage. The words interpolated are well known :

“ He builds *His* Church upon *that one* [Peter], and to *Him* entrusts *His* sheep to be fed. . . .

“ *He* established one Chair and . . .

“ *And primacy is given to Peter, that one Church of Christ and one Chair may be pointed out ; and all are pastors and one flock is shown, to be fed by all the apostles with one-hearted accord.*

“ *He who deserts the Chair of Peter, on which the Church was founded, does he trust that he is in the Church ?*”

Now, the words in italics are spurious. “The history of their interpolation,” says Archbishop Benson, “may be distinctly traced even now, and it is as singular as their controversial importance has been unmeasured. Their insertion in the pages of *De Unitate Ecclesiæ* is a forgery which has deceived an army of scholars and caused the allegiance of unwilling thousands to Rome. Because—

there is no disguising the fact—if Cyprian wrote them and believed them, he held and taught the cardinal doctrine of the Roman See. But he did not. He never wrote the words ascribed to him, and the passage, truly penned by him, separated from the italicised words, runs smoothly, and the doctrine *is a different one*. It is the doctrine of a Christendom, perfect in unity, without hint of Petrine or of any primacy. As we have already said, it exhibits a unity indicated (such is the special argument of the passage) by Christ, committing one and the same charge, first to one and then to all of the apostles as peers or equals of that one.

“Nor could the interpolations ever have been meant as honest paraphrases. The manipulation is too great. The insertions and the omissions bear on the face of them the evidence of design. This was to raise the Chair of Peter over all the Churches in the world. And to this end Rome, or rather an unscrupulous friend of Rome, resorted to the corruption of the text of Cyprian’s *De Unitate*. Their origin may also be quite fortuitous, the ignorance of a scribe, the devotion of a Roman priest, who copied as genuine Cyprianic

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text a paraphrase of Cyprian's text by Pope Pelagius II., A.D. 585. But be that as it may, if Rome can be excused for the origin of the fraud, she cannot be pardoned for having deliberately for these centuries forced it, by papal authority, in the teeth of evidence upon editors and printers who were at its mercy."¹

These interpolations were first perpetrated in an edition of St. Cyprian's works which contains ten treatises and seven letters. According to the learned scholars Hartel and Dom Chapman, the three principal families of manuscripts, where nowadays the omissions and insertions are found, derive from that edition. Amongst other codices the so-called *Codices Monacenses* (M), traced to an apograph (X), now lost, contain the interpolations. Father Chapman thinks, very ingeniously, that St. Cyprian himself is their author. He believes that the saint, at the time of Novatus, made a second edition of his *De Unitate*, in order to counteract by it the nefarious influence of that schismatic priest, as the first edition of his work had been directed against the schism of Felicissimus. He supports his opinions by the following

¹ Archbishop Benson, *Cyprian : his Life, his Times, his Work*.

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arguments : (a) The interpolated readings aim at the schism of Novatus ; (b) they existed, very likely, in the third century ; (c) they were quoted, or otherwise made use of, in the fourth century, by St. Optatus, St. Jerome, and later on by Pope Gelasius II. and the Venerable Bede. I answer to all this : (a) The Novatian schism did not attack the primacy of the See of Rome ; there was no need, therefore, that St. Cyprian should have added the well-known passages to his treatise to defend the primacy of the Bishop of Rome. The only crime of Novatus was to deny the legitimate claim of Bishop Cornelius to the See of Rome : in no way did he reject the primacy of that See. (b) The manuscript which, first of all, offers the interpolations, was written in the eighth century. Dom Chapman thinks that it can be traced back to an archetype of the third century ; but he does not prove his assertion. (c) He likewise asserts that the doctors Optatus and Jerome knew the Cyprianic interpolations and made use of them in their own writings. And why so ? Because the two saints mention the words *cathedra Petri*, a formula which occurs in an interpolated passage of *De Unitate*.

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But the learned author should call to mind that a similar phrase is to be found in one of St. Cyprian's letters to Cornelius (Epist. LIX. 14); his argument, therefore, is not to the point. I do not mention here the attempts that have been made to find a trace of the interpolated passages in the writings of Prudentius, Ambrose, and Augustine, because they all failed miserably. The interpolation, therefore, is certain, and is admitted now by all scholars, Catholic as well as Protestant, although in most Roman seminaries this is still simply ignored.¹

To conclude in the words of Archbishop Benson: "Singular, hateful, and in its time effective, has been this forgery as a papal aggression upon history and literature."

"Its first threads may have been marginal summaries in exaggerated language. Then came an unwarrantable paraphrase and a deliberate mutilation for a political purpose. Then it appeared in the manuscripts of the

¹ Cf. Hartel, *St. Cypriani Opera Omnia* (Vindobonæ, 1868); John Dom Chapman in the *Revue Bénédictine*, p. 364, No. 4, October 1902; Abbé Joseph Turmel, *Histoire du dogme de la Papauté*, pp. 109, 110 (Paris: Picard, 1908); Archbishop E. White Benson, *Cyprian: his Life, his Time, his Work* (London, 1897).

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author with its indictment round its neck, side by side on the same page with the original which it caricatured. Then it was forced into two grand editions with an interval of a century and a half between them, first by the Court of Rome itself, then by the Court of France with the fear of Rome before its eyes: ‘Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere sedem!’”¹

A word more about St. Augustine. It is a fact, both singular and wonderful, that the great doctor of Hippo, in his treatise on the Unity of the Church, never so much as alludes to Rome or to the Bishop of Rome, as the centre of Church Government and the formal cause of the unity of the Church. On the contrary, he thus argues against the Donatists: “You ask me where the Church is? I answer: search the Scriptures.” And in fact he proceeds to show that, according to the Scriptures, the true Church of Christ is spread all over the world, and not confined to a small corner of Africa, as the Donatists pretended it was. And that is all. True, St. Augustine twice quotes the text, “and

¹ Archbishop E. White Benson, *Cyprian: his Life, his Time, his Work*, p. 219. London, 1897.

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upon this rock I will build my Church"; but he interprets it in a mystical way. And yet it would have been so easy for him to say: "You, Donatists, ask me where the Church is. I answer: The Church is where Peter is. Those are in the true Church of Christ who are in communion with the See of Rome; but, as you reject the Communion of Rome, so you are out of the true Church of Christ." This argument would have been a very forcible one; yet, I repeat, St. Augustine does not even think of it. He appeals to the Scriptures as the supreme rule of faith; nothing more or less, and that is all.¹

What is the natural conclusion from all this? Apparently this, that in a more or less near future the Roman theologians will be forced to modify to a great extent the idea and definition of the Church. The Church is not, as they think, an absolute monarchy, with the Pope at her head; but rather a great republic of Churches, independent of one another, and yet linked together by the profession of the same faith, by the practice of the same Christian life, and by love. This

¹ *S. Augustini Episcopi, Liber sive Epistula De Unitate Ecclesiæ contra Petiliani Donatistæ Epistulam.*

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is the only unity of the Christian Church which can be proved to be really primitive. All the rest is a late development, nothing else.

The ancient Fathers and ecclesiastical writers of the Church professed about her nature and constitutions the belief which I have been so far explaining, and two General Councils of the Church, which were really free, and at which all Christian nations were duly represented, the Councils of Constance and of Basel, thought, believed, and discussed about this weighty subject in no other way than I have done heretofore. Let the reader, if he chooses, consult the writings of John Gerson and other theologians of his times, and he will see for himself what those men thought about the constitution of the Church. From St. Cyprian's times to the Councils of Constance and Basel, more than one thousand years elapsed, but the true idea of the Church of Christ was never lost. It survived through the boisterous and difficult mediæval times. Unfortunately, two centuries later, it began to founder on the deceitful shoals of Rome.

CHAPTER VI

ORIGIN OF THE ROMAN CLAIMS

TERTULLIAN and Cyprian scorned, both in theory and practice, the idea that the Bishop of Rome was *Summus Pontifex* and *Episcopus Episcoporum*; yet there is no disguising the fact that the Church of Rome, almost from the very beginning, put forth claims to a certain superiority and primacy over all other Churches. The tone of the letter of the Roman Church to the Church of the Corinthians; the attitude of Pope Victor in the question of Easter; the strong words of Pope Stephen to St. Cyprian; the letter of Pope Zosimus to the African bishops; the proclamation of the legate Philip before the Fathers at the Council of Ephesus; and other documents down to Pope Gelasius, all go to show that Rome did not forget itself. I do not mention the texts of St. Ignatius

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and Irenæus, because they are too obscure and uncertain to prove anything.¹

The claims of the Roman Church were resolutely and constantly resisted from the very beginning, which fact should set Roman theologians thinking whether their claims are not, after all, rather of human than divine appointment.

According to me, the rise and further development of the Roman claims are due to the following causes :

1. In St. Matthew's Gospel xvi. 13-19

¹ The words of St. Ignatius, *προκαθημένη τῆς ἀγάπης* ("presidens in charitate"), if they prove anything, show that at the time of St. Ignatius the Church of Rome was famous all over the Christian world for her charity, a thing attested also by St. Dionysius, quoted by Eusebius, *H. E.* lib. iv. cap. xxiii. § 10. I say, if they prove anything, because the reading is very uncertain and the meaning obscure. Cf. St. Ignatius, *Epistula ad Romanos*; F. X. Funk, *Patres Apostolici*; G. Rauschen, *Florilegium Patristicum* (Bonnæ, 1904).

The same thing, and that with greater reason, must be said of St. Irenæus's text about the Roman Church. From Dr. Grabe to Dom Chapman, a host of learned men have attempted to fix a definite meaning on the famous text, and all failed; because the original Greek text of the saint is lost, the translation is barbarous, the reading doubtful, and the meaning very obscure. It is high time that Roman divines should cease quoting St. Irenæus's text in favour of the Roman Church. At the best it is worth very little. Cf. *Opera S. Irenæi contra Hæreses*, lib. iii. cap. iii.; *Dissertationes in Irenæi Libros*, pp. 219, 231 (ed. Migne); Dom John Chapman, *Le Témoignage de St. Irénée en faveur de la Primauté Romaine* (*Revue Bénédictine*, Février 1895).

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and elsewhere—supposing these texts to be genuine, and not later interpolations, as some scholars are inclined to think—there is a real ground for a limited primacy, but of Peter over the rest of the apostles, not of the Bishop of Rome over his fellow bishops in Christendom. Peter was certainly among the apostles *primus inter pares*, but for the modern Roman claims there is no foundation whatever in that text. On the other hand, in the Gospels and Epistles there are other texts that seem to counter-balance more than half the weight of St. Matthew's text.

2. Connected with the famous text is also the inference that, as Christ in it blesses St. Peter and promises him a reward for his faith and confession, the effect of Christ's blessing and the reward can hardly be any other thing but the primacy in the Roman sense. This we deny. We must never forget that St. Peter, in the person of all the apostles, had already made a similar confession, long before the scene at Cæsarea Philippi: And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John vi. 69), a confession,

indeed, fuller and more emphatic than that at Cæsarea. Fr. Corluy, S.J., to solve the difficulty which St. John's text undoubtedly creates against Matthew's xvi. 16, answers in a twofold manner: "Perhaps," he says, "John's original text read, ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ, 'that Thou art the Christ, the holy one of God,' which is less than ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, the Son of God." Certainly it is less, infinitely less; but are you warranted in making such a supposition? The good Father sees that, and therefore adds; "Si præfertur lectio ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ admittendum est tunc temporis nec Petri nec ceterorum apostolorum supernæ Christi naturæ cognitionem tam plenam fuisse, ut eum unius cum Patre naturæ esse crederent."¹ Admittendum est: it is to be admitted. Why? Because, otherwise, the force of Matthew's text would be too far diminished. The Roman theological prejudice must be held up at all costs.

My answer is, St. Peter got his reward in being proclaimed blessed by our Lord; in being given the privilege of fixing, so to

¹ P. Corluy, S.J., *Spicilegium Dogmaticum Biblicum*, tom. i. p. 37. Gandavi, 1834.

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say, the formula and rule of faith, upon which, as upon a rock, Christ would found His Church; and finally, in getting the promise of the keys of the Church in a solemn manner, before all the other apostles, with a certain pre-eminence of honour among his fellow apostles. Is not this a magnificent reward?

3. Various historical circumstances combined in no little degree to bring the Roman Church to what it now is. The greatness of imperial Rome could hardly fail to give lustre, dignity, and power to the Church resident within its walls. And so we find that already, from the beginning of the second century, the Church in Rome was greatly respected, far-famed, very holy, charitable, and very rich. Later on followed the division of the empire into metropolises, in consequence of which, the Church also established its metropolitans, corresponding to the Roman divisions. Rome became one, Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica, others. Under Constantine the Great the empire was further divided into four patriarchates, which the Church immediately imitated, and the Bishop of Rome became

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the Patriarch of the West. That the greatness of the Roman See was dependent in a great measure on the greatness of the capital may be deduced also from the third Canon of the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381), which decreed "that the Bishop of Constantinople have the prerogative (*πρεσβεία*) of honour, after the Bishop of Rome, because Constantinople is new Rome." In this Canon it is assumed as undisputed that "the prerogatives of the Bishop of Rome depended on the greatness of the capital of the world." The Popes were well aware of this; hence, when Constantine transferred the capital to Constantinople they began to urge in favour of their own primacy the promise of Christ to St. Peter (Matt. xvi. 16-19) and the tradition of the Church.

4. Another important agent in the growth of the papal claims is to be found in the ancient bishops themselves, who, by appealing to the Bishop of Rome in their quarrels, made him believe himself to be their natural and divinely appointed judge. This was the case especially during the Arian troubles, when St. Athanasius appealed to Pope

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Julius, and others after him. Hence the Council of Sardica confirmed this custom by permitting the bishops to appeal to Rome. "This also is in like manner to be provided for, that if in any eparchy [province] one of the bishops should have any matter against his brother and fellow-bishop, neither of these shall call in as judges bishops of another eparchy. If, however, any one of the bishops shall seem to have been condemned in any matter, and thinks that he has not a bad case, but a good one, in order that the decision may be considered afresh, if it seems good to your charity, let us honour the memory of blessed Peter, and let letters be written, by those who have given judgment, to Julius, Bishop of Rome, that so, by the neighbouring bishops of that province, the judgment may be considered anew, and he furnish the judges" (Council of Sardica, Canon III.).

About this Canon the Ballerini Brothers and Palma agree with the Gallicans, Peter de Marca, Quesnel, Dupin, Richter, Febronius, and others, that the Council, with the words, "Let us honour the memory of blessed Peter," etc., conferred on the Bishop of

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Rome a privilege which he had not previously had, at least *de jure*, if not *de facto*. To counteract, however, the consequence, contrary to the Roman claims, which may be deduced from it, the Ballerini Brothers uphold that this Canon did not deal with the appeal to Rome itself, but only the revision of the process. This Hefele contradicts most energetically, and shows, with good arguments, that Canon III. deals with appeals properly so called and with nothing else.¹

5. But there is much more. In the history of the rise and gradual development of the papal claims the historian must never lose sight of a force which was for centuries at work in favour of the Papacy, *i.e.* the falsifications and interpolations of passages in the books of the ancient Fathers, or in the Acts and Canons of the Councils, in order to defend or promote the interests, the dignity, and the grandeur of the Roman See. It is true these frauds do not explain by themselves the gradual development of the exaggerated claims of the Papacy, but no historian of independent judgment and

¹ Hefele, *History of the Christian Councils*, vol. ii. p. 559. French ed. Paris, 1869.

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learning will ever be able to deny that those frauds helped, to a great extent, the growth of the papal claims, and contributed very largely to their being recognised as of divine appointment.

For instance, the Roman theologians for centuries appealed to the false decretals and to the interpolated text of St. Cyprian's *De Unitate Ecclesiæ* as to authentic documents witnessing to the belief of the universal Church with regard to the Papacy, and the learned never dared call in question such momentous evidences, though on other and reasonable grounds well inclined to do so. Yet the false decretals and Cyprian's interpolated passages were shameless fabrications.

As a matter of fact, as Rufinus in his book, *De Adulteratione Librorum Origenis*, rightly remarks, it was pretty common in the early centuries of the Church (and, we may add, all through the Middle Ages till the invention of the press) to corrupt the writings of the great ecclesiastical writers, forging new books or passages, altering the genuine ones, adding to them explanatory phrases, correcting what they believed to be misspellings of ignorant amanuenses, or mis-translations, as

the case may be, suppressing this or that, reducing this text to a more orthodox tenor, and the like. Thus, says he, were corrupted and interpolated the writings of Tertullian, of St. Hilary, of St. Cyprian, and, above all, of Origen.¹

In this way, as already shown, we have to register the famous Cyprianic interpolation in favour of the Papacy in *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, which interpolation was again reprinted, not many years ago, by Migne in his edition of the Church Fathers; but it was rightly omitted by Hartel in his Vienna edition (1868) of St. Cyprian's works, and he added a clear and forcible demonstration of the fraud, and of its origin.² If Bossuet had known, and held the Cyprianic interpolation to be certainly spurious, he would have spoken and written about the primacy of the Pope in quite another strain. Yet, even with the Cyprianic interpolation under his eyes, which he believed to be genuine, his genius saw through the exaggerated claims of the Papacy, and denounced them.

¹ *Origenis Opera*, tom. vii. p. 629 seq. ; Migne, *Patrol. Græc.*

² *Sancti Tasci Cæcili Cypriani, Opera Omnia*, Recensuit Gulielmus Hartel. Vindobonæ, 1868.

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Another forgery in favour of Rome is found in the formula, or profession of faith, which Pope Hormisdas presented for signature to the oriental bishops who had taken part in the Acacian schism. In that formula we read the following words: "Quia in Sede Apostolica immaculata est semper catholica reservata religio *et sancta celebrata doctrina.*" The words in italics are wanting in the genuine formula which Pope Hormisdas consigned to his legates for the Greek Emperor Anastasius, nor are they in his Letter 26 to the bishops of Spain. They appear, however, in the formula signed by the Fathers of the Eighth Ecumenical Council, and from that document were taken by the Vatican Council to establish the infallibility of the Pope. But they are not genuine. They are wanting in both the sources—*i.e.* in the formula of St. Hormisdas and in his Letter 26. They were, therefore, interpolated into the Acts of the Eighth Council by a friend of Rome.¹

A forgery, likewise, are the five documents, once commonly given at full length, in the old editions of *Collectio Conciliorum*, to show that the Fathers of the Council of Nicæa

¹ Cf. Thiel, *Epistolæ Rom. Pontif.*

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asked for the approval and ratification of their Canons and Acts by Pope Sylvester. The five documents are: (a) A collective letter written by Osius, Macarius of Jerusalem, and the two Roman priests, Victor and Vincent, to Pope Sylvester; (b) the answer of the latter, containing the ratification of the Council; (c) another letter of Pope Sylvester, almost identical in purpose with the former one; (d) the Acts of a supposed Roman Council, convened by Pope Sylvester, in order to confirm the Council of Nicæa; (e) the *Constitutio Sylvestri*. All these documents are spurious. They were forged at a much later date than the Council of Nicæa, perhaps in the sixth century, by a Lombard priest, who lived at Rome, and wanted by that fabrication to defend Pope Symmachus, who had been accused of several crimes and summoned before a Synod of Bishops (501 or 503), who, however, acquitted him. The style and Latin of the documents are simply barbarous.¹

The words which the *Prisca*, the ancient Latin translation of the Nicene Canons, prefixes to Canon VI.—*Ecclesia Romana semper*

¹ Cf. D. Constant, *Epistolæ Rom. Pontificum*, Præf. p. lxxxvi. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, vol. i. p. 430 seq.

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habuit primatum ("The Roman Church has always possessed the primacy")—are interpolated, spurious, and false.¹ The true and genuine wording of Canon VI. is as follows: "The ancient custom, followed in Egypt, Libya, and in the Pentapolis, must continue—*i.e.* that the Bishop of Alexandria is to have the right of jurisdiction over all those provinces, because he is in the same conditions as the Bishop of Rome."

Some unknown friend of the Roman See, a monk, perhaps, finding implied in this Canon a certain equality of rank, condition, and power of the Bishop of Alexandria with that of Rome, prefixed to the old *Prisca* the aforesaid words, to save the primacy of the Pope. But the words thus added are his, not those of the Council of Nicæa.

Altogether spurious and fabricated is the pretended Synod of Sinuessa, held in that place A.D. 303, in which it was established that *Prima Sedes non judicatur a quopiam* ("The first See [that of Rome] may not be judged by any one"). Hardouin and Mansi inserted the Acts of that Council in their collections; but now all the learned, Catholic

¹ Cf. Hardouin, S.J., *Collectio Concil.* tom. i. p. 325.

as well as Protestant, agree in holding these Canons to be spurious and utterly fabricated. Thus wrote, many years ago, Pagi, Papebröck, Natalis Alexander, Remi Ceillier, Bower, Walch, and others.

False likewise is the celebrated *Decretum Gelasii* (the Decree of Pope St. Gelasius I.), where we meet very strong words in favour of the primacy of the Roman See. This has been lately demonstrated again, with very convincing arguments, by M. Roux in his book, *Le Pape St. Gelase*.¹

Largely interpolated, or, at least, very doubtful, is the text of the Canons III., IV., V. of the Council of Sardica. The Greek text of the Canons is much less explicit in favour of Rome than the Latin translation of Denis, which bluntly attributes the right of revision to the Pope. In the ancient *Prisca*, moreover, the additional sentence occurs: *Quæ decreverit Romanus Episcopus, confirmata erunt* ("What the Roman Bishop has decreed, shall be confirmed"), which words are altogether wanting in the Greek text.²

¹ Roux, *Le Pape St. Gelase*, cap. vii. Paris, 1880.

² Cf. Van Espen, *Diritto Ecclesiastico*, ed. Ital. p. 276; Fuchs, Hefele, etc.

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Of course, it is well known that the Council of Sardica is not, and never was, held for Ecumenical. Its canons had, however, a fictitious importance owing to the fact that later on Pope Zosimus (A.D. 417-418), in the cause of the priest Apiarius from Sicca in Africa, deposed from his rank by the bishop of that see, and appealing to Rome, the Pope, I say, in order to show that he had the right to accept the appeal of Apiarius, quoted, and referred the African bishops to what he called a Canon of the Council of Nicæa which says: "When a bishop believes he has been unjustly deposed by his colleagues he may appeal to Rome, and the Roman bishop shall have his cause examined by new judges (*judices in partibus?*)" This Canon is not of Nicæa, but of Sardica, the fifth in the Greek, the seventh in the Latin text.

Another fraud, as singular as it is evident, has to do with the Canons of the Council of Nicæa, translated early into Arabic and edited in the sixteenth century by the Maronite Abraham Echellensis. Amongst them is found the following, which comes under Number XLIV.: "Quemadmodum Patriarcha

potestatem habet super subditos suos; ita quoque potestatem habet Romanus Pontifex super universos Patriarchas, quemadmodum habebat Petrus super universos Christianitatis principes et concilia ipsorum; quoniam Christi Vicarius est super redemptionem, Ecclesias et cunctos populos ejus." (Just as the Patriarch has authority over his subjects, so has the Roman Pontiff over all the Patriarchs, as St. Peter had over all the princes of Christendom and their Councils; because the Pope is the Vicar of Christ over the redemption, all the Churches and all his peoples.) These supposed Arabic Canons of the Council of Nicæa were brought from Alexandria in Egypt into Europe by the Italian Jesuit John Baptist Romano, and were directly received as genuine, though in themselves most absurd, by the Jesuit Francis Turrianus; and another Jesuit, Alphonsus Pisano, did not shrink from inserting them into his history of the Council of Nicæa. The latter accepted likewise, as authentic, a pretended letter of St. Athanasius to Pope Marcus. The fact is that the Council of Nicæa made but twenty Canons, and the aforesaid Arabian Canons are synodical regulations referring to

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various oriental peoples, as, to Syrians, Chaldeans, Maronites, Copts, Jacobites, etc., etc. Moreover, the manuscripts from which the Maronite Abraham copied them are full of blunders, misspellings, interpolations, and various readings; which must be said in particular of Canon XLIV., savouring of modern manipulation from without. At any rate, even should it be genuine, which we most emphatically deny, the explanation is at hand. History tells us that, in former centuries, now this, now that oriental Church, driven to the wall by the Turks, used to approach the Roman Church with the view of obtaining from her more fortunate sister money and men against her foes. To get all this more easily, those oriental Churches in distress gratified the Pope with the most splendid and laudatory titles, which, later on, they themselves laughed at. In fact, as soon as the political danger that threatened them was warded off, they fell back into the schism and hated Rome more than ever. This is the history of all oriental Churches, the Maronite excepted. Notwithstanding all this, and in spite of history and of sound criticism, the so-called Arabian Canons were accepted as genuine by

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Fr. Hardouin, and printed in his *Collectio Conciliorum*.¹

There remains the most important fraud of all, the fraud of the so-called FALSE DECRETALS. About the year A.D. 853 there appeared in France a collection of Canons, letters, and papal regulations, named after Isidorus Mercator, or pseudo-Isidore. It is divided into three parts. The first contains the so-called Apostolic Canons, fifty in number, the Acts of the Council of Nicæa, and sixty decretals, from Pope Clement to Pope Melchiades. The decretals are absolutely spurious and forged; the Apostolic Canons are partly spurious, partly interpolated or variously corrupted, none of them really apostolic. The Canons of the Council of Nicæa are a more or less faithful translation from the Greek text of the Council's Acts. The second part of the collection embraces the Acts of the Councils, from the Nicene till the Second Hispalense (A.D. 619). With few exceptions, these Acts of all these Councils are reported from more ancient collections, and deserve a very limited credit, because only a few of them are genuine, and

¹ Cf. Hefele, *History of the Councils*, vol. i. p. 350 seq.

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not many either of the forged or genuine are kept free from substantial corruptions. The third part consists of many papal decretals from Pope Sylvester to Pope St. Gregory I., with the additions of a few decrees attributed to Gregory II. In this part of the collection some forty documents are absolutely false and forged. They were fabricated by the pseudo-Isidore. The forger thought thereby to raise the Pope above all in the Church. To this end he maintains that (a) no Council, not even provincial, may be convened without the Pope's permission; (b) the Pope, being superior to all bishops, may not be judged by any of them; (c) he says that the bishops are called *in partes sollicitudinis Romani Pontificis*, i.e. "to share, in a certain measure, the pastoral cares of the Roman Pontiff," whence he rightly infers that the bishops are but the vicars of the Pope; (d) the bishops, nay, even the priests, may always appeal to the Pope.

This fraud acquired in course of time such an authority in the Church that theologians, canonists, bishops, nay, even the Popes and the Councils themselves, appealed to the false decretals and quoted them as authentic

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and genuine.¹ The first doubt about the authenticity of the Decretals rose in the sixteenth century. But it was vehemently defended by the Jesuit Turrianus (A.D. 1572) against the writers of the *Magdeburg Centuriæ*, who attacked it. Turrianus was refuted and reduced to silence by Blondel and by a host of others. Catholic as well as Protestant scholars now recognise part of the Decretals as spurious and forged, and give to the other part that weight and authority (and in that measure) which it deserves. The moral evil that the false decretals caused can hardly be imagined. They were for centuries the acknowledged, revered, and authentic source of ecclesiastical, and, partly at least, also of civil law.² And it must be remarked here, that when in 1582, by order of Pope Gregory XIII. and under the revision of a committee appointed by him, the correct text of the *Corpus Juris* was published, the false decretals were retained, although, even then, most of the learned asked for their suppression. But the decretals, genuine and

¹ Cf. Rev. B. Jungmann, *Dissertatio in Hist. Eccl.*, vol. iii. pp. 43-116. Ratisbon, 1881.

² Cf. Franciscus Xav. Funk, *History of the Church*, vol. i. p. 331, § 98.

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spurious, afforded a great help and support to the exaggerated claims of the Papacy, and so Rome overlooked the forgery, relying on the almost infinite credulity of mankind. Subsequent events have proved that Rome was right. Even now a great number of pious theologians swear by the false decretals!

Nor is it to be wondered at that the false decretals should have been introduced, even so late as 1582, into the *Corpus Juris*. The chief collections of Councils and ecclesiastical laws were compiled by Jesuits or by their pupils. Now it is well known that, to a Jesuit, the only purpose in life is to defend, promote, and exalt the interests of the Papacy. The Jesuit Sirmond, at the command of Pope Paul V., made a collection of the decisions of Councils, from which, at the instigation, and by the advice of, Cardinal Bellarmine, himself a Jesuit, he omitted the Acts of the Council of Basel. The Sirmond collection formed the groundwork for all the collections that were compiled later on. To Fr. Sirmond succeeded Fr. Labbé, another Jesuit from Bourges, who was followed by the Jesuit Cossart. Somewhat later the work was taken up by Fr. Hardouin,

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a French Jesuit, and a great enemy of the Gallican Church. Fr. Hardouin never fails, when he can, to display his love for Rome and for the papal prerogatives. At the death of Louis XIV. the Hardouin edition of the Councils was forbidden by an Act of the French Parliament, being thereby declared to be contrary to the principles of the State and to the laws of the Gallican Church. All the copies that could be found were seized and destroyed. However, some years later, it was permitted, on condition that a book of rectifications in the Gallican sense should be added to each copy offered for sale. Finally, it was permitted without any restrictions whatever. Dr. Salmon, Professor of the French Sorbonne, wrote a scathing criticism of Hardouin's work.¹

The reader, at this point of our historical researches, may ask what part Rome had in all the aforesaid shameless interpolations, forgeries, and frauds. We answer: the Popes, as Popes, very likely had none. The Roman prelates, when still at the bottom of the bureaucratic scale, and looking about for help to reach the golden top, were certainly

¹ Cf. Hétiéle, *History of the Councils*, vol. i. p. 70 seq.

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guilty of some literary and theological frauds; but on the whole, we are rather inclined to excuse them, as they were never themselves noted for excessive learning. These frauds are mostly due to bishops, monks, or priests, needing the help and patronage of Rome against other bishops, princes, or ecclesiastical superiors, or desirous to be smiled upon by the then reigning Pope and promoted to higher rank in the hierarchy. Some of the interpolators or forgers, however, may have acted in good faith. It was perhaps a marginal note, which passed innocently into the text; an incorrect reading which was mistaken for the right one; this transcriber was deceived by a faulty copy, that one corrupted a manuscript for the sake of the Papacy, or to help a friend in need. At any rate, let the origin of all these frauds be as it may, the papal prerogatives, in the eyes of the learned, have gained very little indeed by such methods and ways!

6. But there was another element at work in bringing to the front the claims of Rome: the natural inclination in man to unity, his natural love of uniformity, his passion for imperialism. The Church, it must never be

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forgotten, was brought to Rome when the empire was at its best. Rome dreamt of nothing but imperialism, of uniform laws, of Roman enactments imposed on conquered nations, of assimilating the vanquished peoples to itself, of bringing all gods to its own pantheon. This love of unity and uniformity has ever been a mania of Rome. When, happily, the Roman Empire fell to pieces, broken up just because its rulers wanted to enforce the Roman standard, the Roman laws, the Roman customs on every nation of the world, the Roman Church tried to effectuate in the Christian what the Roman Empire had failed to accomplish in the Pagan world. The Church strove to set up everywhere a single standard of faith, of ritual, of customs, of government, and that standard was to be its own, the Roman. The word may seem very hard, but that is a mania, a dangerous mania, the mania of unity, or rather uniformity. But why bring the world into confusion and internecine strife for the sake of a unity and conformity which it is not God's will to have in His Church? Christ founded Christianity at large, the Church in general, not the par-

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ticular Church even of Jerusalem. He left to the apostles the care of founding particular Churches, national Churches. He brought down from heaven the heavenly tree and consigned it to the Twelve, to be planted all over the world. Is it to be wondered at if that tree, in different parts of the world, took special features, was clothed in a particular foliage, brought forth characteristic flowers, and yielded peculiar fruits, in accordance with the quality of the soil, the aspect of the place, the mildness or harshness of the climate? I say it most deliberately: the apostles instituted national Churches, having a liturgy, a language, customs and characters quite distinct from one another, yet bound together by the bond of a common faith as to the essentials, and a common love of Christ, the Son of God. In the beginning of the third century there existed more than two dozen different liturgies, from India to Rome, from Ethiopia to Germany, and the standard, so to say, of each national Church was its liturgy. Many of these liturgies disappeared, in the course of time, together with the Churches; a few were given up spontaneously by the bishops them-

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selves, the people generally being reluctant ; others were suppressed by the Popes, who, in their eagerness to bring everything to the Roman standard, saw in liturgical variety a danger to catholicity, and above all to the recognition of the primacy of the holy See. This policy of destroying the national liturgies of the Churches in communion with Rome continued down to our times, when Pope Leo XIII. very wisely put a stop to it. Was it perhaps because nothing was left to destroy ? or because he foresaw the coming rousing of the Churches all over the world ?

The fact is that God will have no uniformity in the world. There are not in it two things which are perfectly alike. He hates uniformity. Not two men are like one another, not two leaves of the same tree, not two stars, not two atoms of matter. Variety is the great cosmic law ; variety is the foundation of the universe and unity is partly a subjective product of our mind, which, being finite and limited, attributes its own limitation to the things it grasps ; limitation, in this case, is unity. Partly, also, it is a characteristic of the universe, but rather as a result of activity, than as a thing in itself. There exists not one

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Universe, but many different things, arranged with a wonderful order and mutual dependence. This order, this mutual dependence, this relation of cause and effect, we call unity. It is a quality of the universe rather than the universe itself. And this unity, it should be remembered, is not uniformity. The latter supposes or implies a perfect equality; the former requires only a certain mutual relation. This correlation does exist in the universe; but not uniformity. However, this mutual relation of things together is a sufficient ground for calling the universe one, not many. In like manner we call mankind one, although men are divided into many races, vastly different from one another in colour, different in psychological and physiological characters. We call a tree one, although there are not two things in it similar to one another. We call a monarchy one, and yet we call a republic also one, an oligarchy, a government like that of the United States, a tribal state, a patriarchal system, and so forth. They are all one, but how different! How unlike one another! Why, then, this madness of wishing to have all others like ourselves? Of hating people, because they

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will not conform to our views? Of declaring them cut off from the grace and the love of Christ because they will not shape their thoughts, manners, actions, and customs according to our standard? If Christ had willed it so, well and good; but He never dreamt of such uniformity in His Church. Christ has not founded the Roman more than the Alexandrian, the Antiochian, or the Ephesian Church. He is the Rock that supports them all, and He is broad enough to support them, just as they are. As God is the Father of all men, and all come from Him, although some are black, some red, others yellow, others brown, others white, so all the Churches are from Him, although they pray in different tongues, use different customs, practise different liturgies, have a more or less different form of government, and differ in things not essential, even in their belief. As the mania in a few despots of building up huge empires has brought on the world untold evils, so the mania of creating a Church one and uniform in everything has caused intolerance, inquisition, religious wars, hatred, persecutions, and every sort of outrage against the liberty of men. And all that, in the name of the Lord!

CHAPTER VII

RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT IN THE CHURCH

ROMAN divines, especially since the Reformation, are most stubbornly opposed to the Protestant distinction between primary and secondary articles of faith: the former necessary and to be believed by all, the latter free and the object of human, not of divine, faith.

Yet, if you open a Roman Catholic Catechism, you will find forthwith the much-discussed distinction. "What are the principal mysteries of holy faith?" And the child is made to answer: "The Unity and the most blessed Trinity of God; the Incarnation, passion, and death of our Lord Jesus Christ." As a matter of fact, these three mysteries of Christianity—Unity, Trinity, and Incarnation—have been believed from the very beginning, and from these, as from a centre, all the other

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lesser mysteries have radiated during the long course of centuries; and, if one carefully considers it, the formula of the Roman Catechism, embodying, even to this day, the principal mysteries of our faith, is nothing else but the development of Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

This formula was shaped into the Symbol, or the baptismal Creed, which, between the first and second centuries, in Rome, ran as follows: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, and in Christ Jesus, His Son, the only-begotten, who was born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and buried; on the third day rose again, ascended into the heavens, sitteth at the right hand of the Father, whence He cometh to judge the living and dead. And in the Holy Ghost and the resurrection of the flesh."¹

As to the authoritative standard of belief, held in the East early in the third century, we may listen to Origen, who, about the year 220, thus writes in his *De Principiis*, lib. i.

¹ Leighton Pullan, *Early Christian Doctrine*, p. 35. London, 1901.

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n. 47, 48, 49: "As many of those who profess to believe in Christ disagree amongst themselves, not only in small, but also in great things, *i.e.* about God, our Lord Jesus Christ, or the Holy Ghost; and about other points also, as regards the angels . . . therefore it is deemed necessary to lay down about the former a certain rule of belief, and to draw a boundary line; then also to examine into the latter. . . . At any rate, the teaching of the Church is always to be observed, a teaching which was transmitted in orderly succession from the apostles, and remains in the Churches even to the present day. . . .

"Now, this also is to be well kept in mind, that the holy apostles, when preaching the faith of Christ, taught a few things appertaining to the faith very clearly and openly, even to the ears of those who appeared less fit to enter into the secrets of divine knowledge . . . but about other things they asserted indeed their existence, but held their peace as to their nature and origin, leaving to the Christians of the following ages the care of unravelling the hidden mysteries, that so they might have an excellent exercise for their minds. . . .

"The things that the apostles taught openly

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and fully are the following: First, that there is one God, who created all things out of nothing, who is just and good, the Author of the Old as of the New Testament, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Father before every creature; that through Him all things were made; that he is God and man, born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary; that He did truly suffer, rise again, and ascend into heaven; that the Holy Ghost is associated in honour and dignity with the Father and the Son; that it is He who inspired the saints, both of the Old and of the New Dispensation; that there will be a resurrection of the dead, when the body, which is sown in corruption, will be raised in incorruption, and that, in the world to come, the souls of men will inherit eternal life, or suffer eternal punishment, according to their work; that every reasonable soul is a free agent, plotted against by evil spirits, comforted by good angels, but in no way constrained; that the Scriptures were written by the agency of the Spirit of God; that they have two senses, the plain and the hidden, whereof the latter can be known only to those to whom is given the grace of the

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Holy Spirit in the word of wisdom and knowledge.”¹

And St. Irenæus: “The tradition of the apostles enables us to see that the faith of all is one and the same, while all accept one and the same God the Father, and believe the same dispensation of the Incarnation of Son of God, and acknowledge the same gift of the Spirit, and meditate the same precepts, and preserve the same form of that ordination which belongs to the Church, and expect the same coming of the Lord, and await the same salvation of the whole man, both body and soul.”

At the close of the third century most Christians believed the following points of Christian doctrine, or at least most of them; several of them, however, were not apostolic teaching, but a later development or even corruption of the genuine primitive Christian doctrine.

ON GOD

(a) In the unity and trinity of the Godhead.

¹ Origen, *De Principiis*, lib. i. n. 47, 48, 49, abbreviated somewhat. Cf. Bigg's *Bampton Lectures*, 1886, p. 752.

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- (b) In the identification of the Word, or Logos, with Jesus Christ.
- (c) In the divinity of Christ.
- (d) In the divinity of the Holy Ghost.
- (e) In the Incarnation, passion, and death of Jesus Christ.
- (f) In His birth from the Virgin Mary.
- (g) In the Atonement.
- (h) In the resurrection of Christ, His descent to the nether world, and ascent to heaven.

ON THE CHURCH

- (i) In the Church.
- (k) In the power of the Church to absolve from sin.
- (l) In the power of the Church to ordain bishops, priests, and deacons.
- (m) In a religious worship, which consisted in pious readings, prayers, sermon, and the Lord's Supper, with the singing of psalms and hymns.
- (n) In the unity of the Church, which consisted in the mutual love and harmony of the people with their spiritual superiors, *i.e.* bishops, priests, and inferior ministers.

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- (o) In the union of charity amongst the various Churches.

ON MEANS OF GRACE

- (p) They believed in the grace of Christ, which they connected particularly with the Holy Ghost and with spiritual "Charismata."
- (q) In the holy baptism and Eucharist.
- (r) In penance.

ON MAN

- (s) In the immortality of the soul.
- (t) In the resurrection of the dead.
- (u) In life eternal and union of the soul with God in heaven.
- (v) In a hell, or place of punishment.
- (x) In the existence of good spirits, or angels.
- (y) In the existence of evil spirits, or demons.
- (z) In the existence of a chief amongst demons, the devil.

We may prove, with a certain degree of approximation to certainty, that these points of Christian doctrine were believed at the end of the third century, *ab omnibus semper, et*

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ubique—by all, always, and everywhere. But the development did not stop here. It went on, century after century, both with regard to dogma, church discipline, and manner of worship, till it culminated in the definition by the Roman Church, in 1854, of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, and in 1869-70 of the Papal Supremacy and Infallibility.

We must, therefore, admit a certain kind of development within the Christian Church. But here the question rises: Is it legitimate? Is it human or divine? Is it compatible with the unchangeableness of revealed religion? May the Pope, or the bishops, *i.e.* the teaching Church, enjoin as a Christian duty, under the penalty of mortal sin, the belief of a new article of faith, or the practice of a new precept?

To clear up all these questions, I must dwell at some length upon an idea which has too often escaped the attention of the Roman theologians. It is this. Every created thing, whether natural or artificial, is contained within certain limits, is determined by a certain peculiar shape, form, or measure, and cannot develop itself indefinitely beyond its

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proper nature. The height of a poplar, *e.g.*, is not the height of an apple-tree; but neither the one nor the other continues to grow in height indefinitely. When they have reached the maximum of their growth, they stop growing. Each thing has got a height, a measure, a character of its own, beyond which it cannot develop itself without becoming a monstrosity, and so perishing. This is true not only of natural things, but of artificial things likewise, and so the Latin poet sang :

Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines
Quos ultra citraque, nequit consistere rectum.

HORACE.

This being so, will Christianity alone be able to develop itself indefinitely, without alteration, without changing substantially into something very different from its former nature? Who dares say so? Christianity, no less than any other created thing, possesses a form, a nature, a character of its own. When that form, that nature, that character have reached their greatest development, they must perforce cease growing and stop for ever. If they continue to grow, Christianity alters, changes, decays and perishes.

We ask, firstly, what is, so to say, the natural

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measure, growth, or height of Christianity? When did it reach it, if ever? Roman theologians answer that the divine tree of Christianity (which, of course, grows in their garden only), after nineteen hundred years of life, has not attained yet to its full height and growth. In fact, they say between A.D. 1854 and 1870 a growth of two yards was added to it. Do they bring any argument to prove such a fabulous statement? They say that, Christianity being a doctrine, under the influence of the Holy Ghost it can develop itself indefinitely. I answer, Christianity is not merely a doctrine: it is also a worship, a life, a tendency, a communion of the soul with God. It is all this, and not only a body of Christian truths. I answer, further, that even if Christianity be a doctrine only, this doctrine, these tenets, cannot develop themselves indefinitely. The doctrine of Christianity is contained in the Apostles' Creed, which professes all the mysteries of Christianity. Now the Christian mysteries, as all theologians grant, cannot develop themselves at all. This is taught expressly by, amongst others, John Henry Newman, in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. Christianity,

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therefore, cannot properly develop itself beyond its own mysteries, which stand to it as do the shape, the form, the height, the peculiar character to any other created or artificial thing.

Secondly, when did Christianity reach the full growth of its own form and nature? The answer is given by the Roman theologians themselves when they affirm that, with the death of the apostles, the revelation of Christian mysteries was finally closed. What is the inference from all this? We rightly infer that the divine mysteries which Jesus deposited in the hearts and minds of the apostles were by the latter consigned to the faithful, *i.e.* to the Church, which, therefore, at the death of the apostles possessed them all "very clearly and openly," as we heard Origen say. These Christian mysteries, incapable of being developed and comprehended, are the doctrinal object of our faith, they alone and nothing else. They are contained in the primitive creed of the Apostles, and have been believed by all Christians always. That creed is the groundwork of Christianity. It suffices by itself, as far as doctrine is concerned, to make a true Christian

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and to establish a true Church ; when denied, it turns a Christian into an unbeliever. The natural growth of the divine tree of Christianity is contained within the measure of the aforesaid mysteries. The tree reached its greatest growth at the death of the apostles, and was then perfect in its nature. All subsequent growth is to be deemed not essential, but accessory ; human, not divine ; nay, exaggeration, or perhaps superstition.

I have asserted that the dogmatic growth or development which followed the death of the apostles is human, not divine ; additional, not principal. Here is the proof. Theologians of all denominations grant that such a development proceeds, as from its starting-point, from the mysteries spoken of before. Now, how was this development effected ? This question is capital indeed, and deserves our greatest attention, as on it depends the answer to the proposed question, *i.e.* whether the dogmatic growth which is visible in the Church is human or divine. Well, then, if dogmatic development is nothing else, as many divines will have it, but a drawing of the implicit out of the explicit, in the manner in which a theorem of geometry is drawn out of the

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elementary axioms of that science, then the development of a dogma is certainly dogmatic, and, like its parental germ, equally revealed, equally divine. But is it really so? Let us put it to the test.

I open the book *De Verbo Incarnato*, by Fr. Billiot, S.J., Professor of Theology at the Gregorian University at Rome, and read one of its principal theses, that, namely, which professes to explain how “the Word became Flesh.”¹ Our author wants to demonstrate that the union between God and man, through Christ, was effected in the Person of the Word, not in the nature of God. Here is his syllogism: “It is impossible that two beings, different from one another in person or hypostasis, should be predicated of one another. But Holy Scripture says that the ‘Word was made Flesh,’ *i.e.* attributes human nature to the Word. Therefore, it is impossible that these two, *i.e.* the Word and the Man Christ, should have a different person or hypostasis.” This is Fr. Billiot’s argument.

Now I ask, where is the conclusion of the syllogism contained? Not in its minor pre-

¹ P. Ludov. Billiot, S.J., *De Verbo Incarnato*, Thesis V. p. 92 Romæ, 1895.

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miss, certainly. The second proposition of the syllogism affirms only that "the Word was made Flesh." The conclusion, it is clear, is entirely and exclusively contained in the major term, or first proposition, of the syllogism. Now this premiss, depending as it does on the very disputable definition of "person or hypostasis," is neither evident in itself nor taken from Holy Scripture. It is a mere philosophical opinion, which Fr. Billiot tries hard to prove in forty closely printed pages of subtle and abstruse philosophy. At the same time he combats the Catholic doctors Cajetan, Suarez, Scotus, Tiphanius, and others, who understood and spoke of "hypostasis or person" in a quite different manner. And rightly so, because the conclusion of his thesis stands or falls with the philosophical opinion of which it is a mere consequence. The aforesaid doctors are forced by logic and by their philosophy to deduce, from the same premisses laid down by Fr. Billiot, a quite different conclusion. True, they all admit that the "union" was made in the Person and not in the nature of the Word; but the words "person" and "nature" are understood and defined by them in a very different manner from that of

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St. Thomas and, in general, the theologians of the Thomist school. According to Fr. Cajetan, "the essence of person consists in a certain manner or mode of being which is the last term of the individual nature." According to Fr. Suarez, "person is the substantial mode that limits and defines the individual nature." According to Scotus, "it consists in a mere negation of the real or possible dependence of the individual nature." St. Thomas, on the contrary, if he be justly interpreted, calls by the name of person "being itself," and, when speaking of God, "subsistent being." I say, if he be justly interpreted, because, as a matter of fact, all Catholic doctors quote St. Thomas for themselves, and make him say the most different, nay, contradictory things.

When, therefore, the Christian Councils defined that the union of humanity with God was effected in the "Person, not in the nature of the Word," they established and decreed a formula or way of speaking in order to put an end to verbal disputations; they did not explain what that union was, or clear up the inscrutable mystery of the "Word made Flesh." The early Christians confessed

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Christ “true Man, true God”; the Fathers of the first Councils, as a matter of fact, knew nothing more. All this for two other reasons, which I mention by the way. All theologians admit that in God “Person and nature are not really distinct from one another.” It is, therefore, less than useless to discuss and quarrel about the question whether “the union of humanity with God was made in the Person or in the nature of the Word.” Moreover, man cannot have true and proper ideas about God. He is too lofty for us. When we speak of Him, and discourse on His divine attributes, we make use of analogical ideas—*i.e.* of proportional terms. When, therefore, we speak of God as of a “Person,” we must never forget that that word, when applied to God, *cannot* have the same meaning as it has when said of man. This has been explained by Newman, in his *Grammar of Assent*, by saying that “the real reasoning process by which men arrive at all their important convictions is not purely intellectual, but largely made up of imagination, association, probability, memory, instinct, popular persuasion, heredity, physiological and psychological feelings, and every

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kind of impression that the complexity of man's being is susceptible of." Well, all these *forces*, which were undeniably at work in the dogmatical development of Christian doctrine, demonstrate that the growth is human, not divine. The germ is divine, but the growth is human; just as man is human, not divine, although his soul is created directly by God and infused into the human body. That living germ, descended immediately from God, grows in a human body and makes a man, not a god. And so with the development of dogmas. The Church cannot reveal a new dogma. Upon this all theologians agree. All Christians are obliged to believe the whole of, and only, that body of Catholic truth which was held *ubique*—that is, in all parts; as opposed to any one particular Church; *semper*, always, as opposed to only in recent ages; *ab omnibus*, by all—*i.e.* by the general body of the Church (as Vincent of Lerins explains), not merely as the private opinion of particular teachers.

Now the doctrinal points which were held *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus* are the Christian mysteries, or the real revealed Christian truths in their undeveloped state—those truths

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which, according to Origen, the apostles “transmitted to us *very clearly*” (*manifestissime tradiderunt*) because necessary to the salvation of mankind (*quæcumque necessaria crediderunt*); and these form the groundwork of Christianity, and the germs out of which dogmatic theology has developed itself.

Of these developments two classes can be distinguished—a class of developments of revealed truths, contained clearly in the Bible; and a class of truths not found there, or, at least, not in a clear and undisputed manner. Of the first class of truths the germ is divine, the development is human; of the second class, both the germ and the development are human. In the former case the intellect of man works upon the revealed truth directly, and taking it as its proper object; in the latter it has an indirect bearing upon it, and operates about it, by way of analogy. An example of the first class are the dogmatic definitions concerning the divine Person of Christ; an example of the latter are the definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, or of the papal primacy and infallibility. As the germ which, in the latter case, gives rise to a later development is

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purely human, so it is not to be wondered at if it is not found by scholars and doctors, either in the Scripture or in the early tradition of the Church. St. Bernard, St. Anselm of Canterbury, and St. Thomas certainly had examined pretty thoroughly the contents of revelation; yet not one of those three very eminent men was able to discover in it the truth of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. The reason is obvious. They could not discover it because it was not there; but it was in the heart of the Christians who loved Mary, and in the minds of those doctors who thought it very convenient that the Mother of the Redeemer should partake in an especial manner of the fruit of redemption by being exempted from the original sin. On this principle, I should not wonder at all if, after a few years, St. Joseph also should be declared to have been conceived without original sin. His devotees already think so, and print books to this effect. The Roman Church may define it. The idea is growing, and may ripen. Only it will be a human, not a divine, belief.

CHAPTER VIII

DOCTRINAL UNITY IN THE ROMAN CHURCH

I HAVE said, more than once, that the Church cannot reveal a new truth or dogma. This is so important that it must be kept always before one's eyes, as on it depends the issue of this treatise. According to the view held by all Christian doctors, the later Church can never know what the early Church did not. The revelation given once for all to the apostles cannot be either diminished or added to. It is a "faith once for all delivered," and it is thus of the very essence of the Christian revelation that, as originally given, it is final. St. Paul repeats and reiterates that if any one announces a new dogma he is to be anathematised. Even General Councils cannot frame new articles of faith, and whatever is new to Christian theology in substance is, by that very fact,

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proved not to be of the faith, *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*—according to the formula of Vincent of Lerins.

What is, then, the function of the Church with regard to the teaching of dogmas? Its function is twofold: first to *search* the Scriptures, or tradition, if perchance there may be something in them which escaped the studies of the ancients; then to explain what has been already revealed. This is its duty. It belongs to God only to reveal new articles of faith.

I shall not delay about the first function. If it was possible in the early centuries of the Church to overlook the contents of the Scriptures it is more difficult now, although by no means impossible; and no one can tell what surprises Holy Writ may keep in store for us, as its contents are almost infinite. Its second function is to explain what has been already revealed, and here the theory of development finds its proper place.

Now in the Scriptures and tradition there is the article of faith, the dogma, not its explanation and interpretation. The explanation was left to the Church, to General Councils, to Christian divines. The articles of faith were delivered by the apostles very

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distinctly (*manifestissime tradiderunt*), as Origen says, but they did not give also their explanation, in order that “those pious Christians who had received from the Holy Ghost the gifts of knowledge, of wisdom, and of tongues might exercise their talents in the interpretation of the mysteries of faith delivered unto them. . . . He, therefore, who wishes to set up a body or a series of Christian doctrines in a scientific way must make use of the aforesaid articles of faith as elements and foundation stones, ‘velut elementis ac fundamentis hujusmodi uti’; examining very carefully each assertion, whether it is necessary and true, and upon them build up his book with the help of other assertions, examples, and reasons found in the Scriptures, and reasons and inferences drawn out of his own investigation” (*De Principiis*, lib. i. n. 49).

What Origen says the Catholic divine ought to do he first set the example of, and before and after him the Church did and still continues to do. Out of the articles of faith, as first principles, or foundation stones, she builds up the explanations of the Christian dogmas.

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Scripture and tradition teach us that Christ was God and man; but they are silent as to the manner in which the union of the Deity in Christ was effected: whether it was *secundum subsistentiam*, or in any other way; that was left to the interpretation of the Church. So likewise they are silent as to the nature of the two wills in Christ, about His actions, about His liberty, and the like.

Scripture and tradition teach us that in the Deity there are three divine things, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, connected together in a wonderful way, and yet that there is only one God. But they are silent as to the nature of those three things divine. They will not tell us that they are three subsistent relatives, much less so *three persons*; and will say nothing of all those wonderful things which are taught by Christian divines about the Holy Trinity.

The Christian Church possesses hundreds of very learned and elaborate theological treatises on the Most Holy Trinity. But what did their writers know more than the simplest Christian folk? They know that in heaven is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, that each one of these three is distinct

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from the other two, and yet all three constitute but one God. They do not know, in reality, anything more. The very word "Trinity" is a word of the second or third century, and, if taken grammatically, is a theological blunder. So much for the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

Scripture and tradition teach us the history of the original fall, and tell us that all men are sinners, even from their mothers' womb. But whether the sin is transmitted from the first man down to us in this, rather than in that other way, whether it consists in this or in that thing, they are utterly silent about it.

Scripture and tradition teach us about heaven and hell, the former a place of reward, the latter of punishment; but about their nature, place, and condition they are absolutely silent. The Church has explained all we know in particular about the four last things.

Now, the Church, the General Councils, and Christian divines, when explaining the articles of faith, must necessarily make use of the ideas, language, and intellectual tendencies of their times. At the bottom of

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their explanation there lies a philosophy, which is the philosophy dominant in their times. Deny that philosophy, and down falls the explanation and interpretation of the article of faith. For instance, in the Holy Trinity there are three persons. But what is a person? Shall I accept the definition of Plato, or that of Aristotle? And, to come nearer to us, shall I lay down as alone true the definition of the schoolmen devoted to St. Thomas, or that of the modern? Shall I say that a person is "a subsisting being, standing complete in itself," or "a self-conscious ego"? or again, shall I accept the definition, or rather the concept, of Scotus and Suarez? That makes an enormous difference in the explanation of the mystery of "Holy Trinity." What is a subsisting relative? If I ask the Thomists I get one answer; if I ask the followers of Scotus I get another quite different. Fr. Suarez, in the eyes of many extreme Thomists, is simply a heretic, especially with regard to the Holy Trinity and our Lord's Incarnation.

Again, suppose the theory of matter and form is groundless, or even false, and what will become of the whole series of Tridentine

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definitions? The fathers of Trent were schoolmen of the Thomist type, and they conceived the explanation of faith in a Thomist way, in obedience to their philosophy. This is the reason why, after close on two thousand years of study, there are no two Christian divines that agree fully on any given subject, and that on each point of doctrine there are at least two or three, often four, five, or even more different opinions. The whole history of dogmatic theology proves this to perfection, and it is no use to deny what is apparent to all who can read.

Therefore the much-boasted doctrinal unity of the Roman Church consists in mere *verbal unity*, whereby the members of that communion are forced by supreme authority to use a certain formula to express a certain revealed truth to the exclusion of all others. But, as that word in the formula can be interpreted in different ways according to different theological and philosophical systems, all agreement finally is an agreement on a word, not on an idea. I believe, for instance, in the spiritual presence of our Lord in the Eucharistic Supper. But how is that presence

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effected? By transubstantiation, says the Roman Church. Suppose I deny the Thomist theory of matter, and form, and accidents, what will the meaning of transubstantiation be to me? Nothing, or else a meaning certainly different from that which the same word conveys to a convinced Thomist. There is, therefore, no doctrinal unity, but unity of words, a consent on formulas brought about by authority, nothing else. The truly revealed articles of faith were consigned to Scripture, and stand there immutable for ever and ever. Even Cardinal Newman took the same view when he wrote: "It is true that, so far as such statements of Scripture ['the word became flesh'] are mysterious, they are relatively to us but words, and cannot be developed."¹ They can be believed, they cannot be explained. They are the object of faith, not of science. They can be expressed in other words, more clear yet equivalent, they cannot be wedded to any philosophical system. They refuse to enter partnership with pure human thought, because they are divine; they

¹ Cardinal J. H. Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, p 98. London, 1845.

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cannot be verified, because they are over and above all human experience. They form the object of revelation, not of human ingenuity. They are the foundation of a supernatural religion, because they come down from heaven. They are the common heritage of all Churches, because God the Word left them to all.

Hence I draw the following inferences :

(a) The explanations of the dogmatic formulas fixed by the various Churches are human, not divine. The very fact that they can vary, according to different systems of philosophy, show their nature clearly.

(b) It is not always very easy to distinguish between a dogmatic formula and its explanation. We may say, in general, that the former contains the object of our dogmatic faith, the latter its doctrine. Therefore, a mere enlargement or expansion of a dogmatic formula is no explanation at all: only its theology rightly deserves this name. As I have said, religion is a life, but theology is its science. God has opened to us two books, Nature and Holy Scripture. The former is the subject-matter of science commonly so-called; the latter of divine

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science, which is theology. Doctrines, then, are in theology what natural laws are in the other sciences. One might say that true Christian doctrine, or theology, is the explanation of Scripture by Scripture, and, as such, one merges into the other, and they are hardly distinguished from one another. But Roman Catholic theology is the explanation of Scripture by human philosophy, and to such a theology is to be applied all I have hitherto said.

(*c*) Under the formula there is the Christian truth to be believed by all, immutable and unchangeable; just as a man's identity does not change with the different dresses he wears.

(*d*) Different Churches disagree rather in teaching a greater or lesser quantity of doctrine than in teaching contradictory creeds. The contradictory doctrines which some Churches undoubtedly teach concern the explanation and interpretation of dogma, not the dogma itself; or concern articles of belief which are in no way contained in Holy Scripture.

(*e*) No Church may impose on its followers the explanations of dogmatic truth, as fundamental revealed truths, under sanction of

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anathema. Just because they are human developments, they are necessarily free. The Christian is not bound to accept them. It may be wise to do so: clergymen will behave prudently if, in imparting religious instruction to the public, they do not depart from them; but they must not adhere to them as to revealed truths. They are aspects of divine revelation, viewed under a certain angle and at a certain time; nothing more.

(f) True dogma cannot be antagonistic to true science, for it is superior to science; it lies far above it; it lives in quite a different world. Dogmas are objects, not of physical investigation, but of faith. But the explanation of dogma, the dogmatic formula, may be antagonistic to science, because it borrows words and ideas from the range of human thought, and as such it falls under its laws, its failings, and its criticism. No one can say a word against the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, mystically conceived; but if you call the supernatural action of Christ's power *transubstantiation* you enter forthwith within the domain of scientific chemistry and natural science. If you explain transubstantiation

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according to the atomic theory, the Thomists will attack you; if you follow the principles of rigid Thomist schoolmen, Scotus and Suarez will rise against you. Independently of any and every philosophic system, who will be able to attack you when you maintain that Christ is really, though spiritually, present in the bread and wine of which you partake at the Lord's Supper? No one, I will dare to say.

Roman theologians labour now under the very difficult, nay, almost impossible task of demonstrating that the early Fathers of the Church held in all things the same opinion as we do, because of the doctrinal continuity which is held to be absolutely necessary to the very existence of the Church. Now, if this doctrinal continuity, with regard to the Fathers, exists as to the dogmas themselves, it is certainly wanting with regard to the explanation of the same dogmas. The Fathers held, in common with the humble people they ministered to, all the principal revealed truths of Christianity, and so far so good. But when they began to discourse on them, to explain and to interpret them, they went into many different opinions, that can hardly now be

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reconciled with one another, and many of them cannot be free from manifest error. Take, for instance, the bishops and saints of the ante-Nicene Church on the mystery of the Holy Trinity. They did believe in the Trinity, for they believed in the Father, in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost; and yet at Antioch they condemned, or at least withdrew, when it came into dispute, the word *homoousion* which later on was received at Nicæa as the special symbol of Catholicism against Arius. The six great bishops of those times were St. Irenæus, St. Hippolytus, St. Cyprian, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, St. Dionysius of Alexandria and St. Methodius. Of these, St. Dionysius is accused by St. Basil of having sown the first seeds of Arianism, and St. Gregory is allowed by the same learned Father to have used language concerning our Lord which he only defends on the plea of an economical object in the writer. St. Hippolytus speaks as if he were ignorant of our Lord's Eternal Sonship; St. Methodius speaks incorrectly, at least, upon the Incarnation; and St. Cyprian is very inexact, to say the least, about baptism and its minister. Again, St. Ignatius may be considered as a

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Patripassian ; St. Justin Arianises ; St. Hippolytus is a Photinian ; Tertullian is heterodox on several points of Christian doctrine ; Origen is, at the very least, suspected ; Eusebius was an Arian.¹

But were all these Fathers heretics ? Not at all. They all believed what we believe, what true Christians always believe. They believed the true, revealed dogmas ; but in trying to explain them they went off in different ways, because it is very natural that men, in the act of thinking, should do so. In fact, “when the intellect is cultivated,” says again Cardinal Newman, “it is as certain that it will develop into a thousand various shapes as that infinite hues and tints and shades of colour will be reflected from the earth’s surface when the sunlight touches it ; and in the matters of religion the more, by reason of the extreme subtlety and abstruseness of the mental action by which they are determined.”² This is human nature, *i.e.* man as God created him. Men that think all alike spontaneously

¹ Cf. Cardinal J. H. Newman, *Development of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 13, 14.

² Cardinal J. H. Newman, in his controversy with Mr. Gladstone, quoted by William Barry in *Newman*, p. 20. London, 1904.

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in religious subjects are nowhere to be found. Verbal doctrinal unity in the Roman Church can be found, real unity never! They repeat materially the same formula, they swear by the same symbol; but what is white to one is black to the other. The meaning of the formulas changes with the changing of the schools and of the religious orders to which the Roman divines belong. To convince himself of this, one has only to study the history of dogmas: Schwane for instance, Scheeben, or Turmel—all three Roman Catholics and learned men. In fact, real doctrinal unity is an impossibility. God will not have it. God has created the universe and man on the lines of variety, not of morbid uniformity. When you find two men whose faces and persons are perfectly alike, I will find also two intellects who think in an identical manner.

There is a certain class of people who, by physiological temperament, want to see everything uniform and to know everything with infallible certainty. They cannot pause a moment in an honest doubt. They must know, and make certain of it. They will never be content unless you can tell them how many souls there are in heaven, purgatory, and

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hell. And what these places are like : whether the fire of purgatory and hell burns exactly like the best Cardiff coal ; whether Jesus Christ knew infinite things and how He knew them. How great is the suffering in hell for each sin, and how long they will have to stay in purgatory for their sins, and how many masses must be said in order to release them from the prison they are so afraid of.

For such people, thus childishly inclined, the Roman Church is the best communion to live and to die in. They will find in it a number of priests, and a far greater number of books, that will tell them all sorts of curious things, and profess to unravel for them all the mysteries of Christendom. It is a pity that what Suarez teaches is denied by Vasques, what St. Thomas lays down as certain Scotus denies as unlikely, what is affirmed by Molina is contradicted by Bannez, and what one school of theology builds up is demolished by another school. But, after all, it matters very little. People affected with the mania of uniformity in belief and certainty in creeds will not mind that. They must know, and make sure of it. That is all.

But is that a certainty worth purchasing ?

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Is that an intellectual peace arrived at by rational means of inquiry and natural evolution? Is it not reached rather by a sheeplike acquiescence in authority about a thing for which there cannot be authority at all? Was not the poet Tennyson right when he sang—

There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds?

CHAPTER IX

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AND THE GOSPEL

IN treating of the Church of Christ, one can hardly avoid discussing the question in what relation it stands to the Bible. Infidels are apt to accuse the Church of being unhistorical, because, they say, it makes use of an argument altogether vicious, *i.e.* of a *circulus vitiosus*. "The Church proves the Bible, and the Bible proves the Church." If I ask why I should believe in the divinity of the Church, I am sent to the Bible; and when I ask the reason why I should believe in the authenticity and truthfulness of the Bible, I am sent to the Church.

If the argument is put in this way, as, in fact, the Roman Church does put it, it is really worth nothing. Indeed, we cannot use both the Bible and the Church to prove one another under the same aspect.

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This proof would be a stupid sophism. The argument holds good if the Bible is taken as an historical document, not as an inspired one. The argument, then, will be thus stated: I take the four Gospels as historical documents. Studying them, just as I would the books of Plato, Virgil, Tacitus, Plutarch, or Dante, I come to the conclusion that they are authentic, they are truthful, and give the real life, works, teaching, miracles, and death of Jesus. Hence I conclude that Jesus of Nazareth is more than a man; that He is really the Son of God, as He protested several times that He was. Now I take a step further, and, considering that the Church was founded by Jesus Christ, I conclude that it is a divine and infallible institution. But the Church tells me that the four Gospels are inspired, and contain the true history of Jesus. I bow my head and believe the Church. The argument, proposed in this way, has not a flaw, and holds water.

Now, in what relation do the Gospels stand to the Church? Are they prior to the Church, or posterior? Are they independent of the Church, or utterly dependent? Are they necessary to the Church, or only acces-

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sory? Could the Church go on without the Gospels, or is it intimately connected with them?

I do not wish to be misunderstood. When I speak of the priority or posteriority of the Gospels, I do not mean the written Gospels. All know that the written Gospels are later in time than the Church. The first of them came into being about the year 68, the last about A.D. 100, and the Church existed a few weeks after Pentecost. About this there is no discussion. By Gospels I mean the Lord's message to the world. This message was delivered first by our Lord Himself; in fact, it formed the theme of His sermons, and then it formed the subject-matter of the preaching of the apostles. The apostles preached the Gospel. Its being put into writing is a pure accidental circumstance which does not affect my argument. I hold, then, that the Church is posterior to the message of Jesus; in fact, it is the consequence, the product, the fruit of that message, and the written Gospels are nothing but the message itself consigned to writing by two apostles and by two disciples of the apostles. The Gospels, therefore, are prior to the

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Church; nay, they have created the Church. They stand, therefore, to the Church as Magna Charta stands to the English Constitution, the rules or constitutions to a religious order, the enactments or laws to an empire, the plan or design to anything whatever. They are the formal cause of the Church, Jesus being its efficient cause. When, therefore, Roman divines argue that for the very knowledge of the existence and authenticity of the Gospels we are indebted to the Church, I deny it most resolutely. Why can I not arrive at a certain conviction about the existence and authenticity of the four Gospels without the help of the Church, just as I do in the case of Plato's or Cicero's books? Well, I appeal, with regard to them, to the world at large; I make use of all the helps science and criticism afford me; I study the internal characters of the book; I take also the Church as a witness; and I come to the conclusion that our four Gospels are really authentic. They contain, undoubtedly in its substance, the teaching of Jesus; they are genuine, *i.e.* they were written by those men whom the Church and tradition assign for their authors, about the time they say they

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were written; and they are substantially trustworthy.

And observe this: the actions, the miracles, and the words of Jesus are stamped with the wonderful impression of divinity. There is no question about it. "The mere study of the Gospels impresses us with the certainty that Jesus was the Son of God. We need no other witness but His. The *effata* of our Lord are of a typical structure, parallel to the prophetic announcements as predictions as well as the laying down of doctrine. In fact, His recorded words and works on earth come to us as the declaration of a lawgiver. In the old Covenant the Almighty, first of all, spoke the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai, and afterwards wrote them. So our Lord first spoke His own Gospel, both of promise and of precept, on the mount, and His evangelists have recorded it. His style, too, corresponds to the authority which He assumes. It is of that solemn, measured, and severe character which bears on the face of it tokens of its belonging to One who 'spake as no other man could speak.' The Beatitudes, with which His sermon opens, are an instance of this incommunicable style,

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which befitted, as far as human words could besit, God incarnate.”¹

The Roman Church discards the Bible as the ultimate rule of faith, because, she says, the heretics of all ages have constantly appealed to the Bible in order to defend themselves against the authority of the Church. Well, this very fact shows the divinity and inspiration of Holy Writ. The comprehensiveness of the four Gospels is simply marvellous. There is no exclusive system there, no limited field of thought. The aphorisms of Jesus seem, at times, contradictory to one another; His views not exactly in harmony with what He expressed on other occasions; His actions, though never reproachable, always wonderful and mysterious. Now all this is the mark of divinity. The Deity, being infinite, looks at the various aspects of things. Man is mostly limited to one only. God will never found a system; man, just because of his limitation, will lay down a set form of things, will put into them an ideal unity, will gather the creations of his mind into the small compass of a system.

¹ Cf. Cardinal J. H. Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 42. London, 1845.

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And in so doing he narrows down his views, shortens the range of his vision, shuts out from his grasp a multitude of facts and things, and limits himself. Just so, because man is a finite being, by nature limited and small. God is infinite, and Christ, being God, we could expect that He should deliver His thoughts in such a form as to comprehend all aspects of things. He has done so, and in consequence all forms of human thought find in Jesus' Gospel a correspondence, if not verbal, mental, if not in words, in deeds, because Jesus, the Logos of the Father, speaks in deeds as well as in words. All heretics have found in the four Gospels the foundation-stones of their religious systems, because those stones were really there. But one or two stones will not make an edifice. To the stones supplied by Jesus Christ they added their own, and so they raised a building praised by some, condemned by others. As with the same stones you can build a palace or a fortress, a Gothic or a Byzantine Church, a Roman Basilica or a classical temple, so the words of Christ have helped to raise up beautiful though different buildings. And who would be so foolish as to condemn Him

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for having placed in His Gospels food for all minds, stones for all buildings, salvation for all men ?

Not that the so-called heretics read the Gospels always aright. But have the orthodox and Roman Catholics read them always in a proper way ? The Gospels need to be read in the light of the Spirit, and one should approach them in fear and trembling and with right intention. If you read the Gospels in order to find a prop for error and evil doing, of course the Gospels will be mute to you ; they will refuse to speak. Jesus is the eternal fountain of the water of God. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink" (John viii. 37).

Finally, the Gospel is the unchangeable part of the Christian religion, which preserves the Church from degenerating and turning into a religion very different from that which Christ founded upon earth.

It is one of the simplest truisms that nothing is fixed in this world. All is changing around us, incessantly, according to eternal laws. And we change together with the material, the moral, and the social world. Our bodies change from babyhood to infancy,

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from infancy to youth, from youth to maturity, from maturity to old age, from old age to a life mysterious, yet higher, still evolving higher and higher towards the goal divine never yet to be attained for ever and ever.

Amidst this wonderful development of all things, religion also changes, and not only as to its discipline, which is conceivable enough, but also with regard to the interpretation of dogmas which come under the intellectual activity of human minds that are changing, that are developing. As a man at fifty has not the same ideas as a boy of fifteen, so a man living in the Middle Ages could not think and act as a man of the twentieth century. Hence the religion of Christ is always in danger of developing beyond its own nature and turning into something foreign to it, by way of one-sided distortion, by way of too easy assimilation of elements which are really uncongenial to its original idea, by way of stagnation or of turning the means into ends.

But just as human and political societies can avert the danger of wrong and one-sided development by going back and appealing

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to their Magna Charta, or Statute Book, so, the Christian religion can always appeal to the Gospel. The words of Christ, now consigned to paper, will never change for evermore. Earth and heaven will pass away; they will remain. Churches will come and go, men will live and die, but Christ's words will be as they are now for ever. And for ever and ever they will be a fountain of pure water to quench the thirst of all those that approach.

In consequence, the Gospel is the final rule of faith, because it contains the one immutable thing of the religion of Christ. The Church can offer to the world no new revelation. Christ has given, once for all, His religion to the world, and His message has been written in the Gospels. If the Church wishes to remain faithful, true, loyal to its divine Founder, it must go back and listen again and again to His divine message, the Gospel of Christ. In this manner only will the Church remain unchangeable in the eternal mutability of all things around her, and her development and progress, because she must develop and progress, will be according to the lines laid down by Jesus

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in His Gospel. Only that development which is in harmony with the message of Jesus is a legitimate development; all other is distortion, corruption, deterioration.

Indeed it was to the message of Christ, to the Gospel, that the Councils and the early Fathers of the Church appealed in their differences about Christian truth. To the Gospel they sent the Pagans that wanted to become Christians, yet knew not to what Church to attach themselves in the contention, division, and confusion that was the lot of the Church of Christ then as it is now. St. John Chrysostom, in a case like this, sends the Pagan to search the Scriptures, which are held by all Christian Churches. "I am glad," he says, "that all parties agree thus far on the Scriptures: for, if we referred you only to reason, you might justly be at a loss; but if we send you to the Scriptures, and they are simple and true, your decision is easy. *Whoever accords with them is a Christian; but whoever is at variance with them is very far from it*" (St. John Chrys. *Homilies on the Acts*, XXXIII., in the *Library of the Fathers*, Part II. pp. 462-7).

The answer St. John Chrysostom gave to

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the religious inquirers of his times we give to-day also. Search the Scriptures, and you will find in them the doctrines of the apostolic creed, the institution of the apostolic ministry, the means of grace, and all doctrines that are common to the majority of Churches. These doctrines are divine, because revealed. The rest is human, because developed out of elements partly human and partly divine. Man has found them, they change with him, and no one should be put out of the Church for disbelieving them. Any Church that does so oversteps openly the command of Christ, and turns the religion of Jesus, which is a religion of liberty, into a religion of oppression.

CHAPTER X

THE DEMOCRACY OF THE CHURCH

WHOEVER studies the origins of the Christian Church cannot fail to observe that, in its beginning, it was a clear and genuine democracy. All the syllogisms and cavils of the Roman theologians will never succeed in confuting this assertion, which I now undertake to prove, though I must do it briefly, so as not too seriously to increase the bulk of the present volume.

First of all, our Lord Himself often asserted the perfect and absolute equality of the members of His Church by teaching that His disciples should look upon themselves as brethren, act as such, and avoid all kind of pre-eminence over each other. In fact, the apostles having once discussed amongst themselves the question who should be the greatest among them, Jesus abruptly stopped

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their dispute with the following words : “ If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all and servant of all ” (Mark ix. 35). And that by these words Jesus not only taught humility, but established, in addition, a perfect equality among His disciples, is to be gathered from what He said on another occasion, when the mother of James and John asked Him to raise her two sons to the first places in His kingdom. Jesus resolutely refused her this favour, and then, turning to all the disciples, added : “ Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you : but whoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant : even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many ” (Matt. xx. 20-8). And elsewhere He insists still more on the same idea : “ But be not ye called Rabbi : for one is your Master, even Christ ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth : for one is your Father who is in heaven.

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Neither be ye called masters ; for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matt. xxiii. 8-11).

The Church of Rome now interprets all those words of Jesus as having been spoken by Him to teach humility ; but the first Christians and the apostles interpreted them quite differently.

In fact, the conduct of the apostles during the first months and years that followed the death of Jesus clearly proves that the Church was a pure democracy founded on the principle of perfect equality, in which the authority and government belonged, not to this or that individual, but to the community of the faithful, or, properly speaking, to the Church. Pontiffs, bishops, and priests governing with despotic and absolute power, as the Roman Church has to-day, were, at that time, absolutely unknown.

Indeed, the first act of the apostles after the ascension of the Lord is the election of an apostle in place of Judas the traitor. Now this selection is made, not by St. Peter, to whom, according to the Roman doctrine, it should have been left, nor by the twelve

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apostles, but by the entire assembly of brethren, "who together numbered about a hundred and twenty" (Acts i. 15); and, moreover, the election took place by drawing lots. And what are the faculties conferred on the new apostle? Must he, perhaps, judge the faithful, that is, exercise a magistracy, or the priesthood? Not at all. In appointing St. Matthias they only wished to complete the mystic number of twelve persons who had lived with Jesus whilst He was living, and might bear testimony to His resurrection (Acts i. 21, 22). But on becoming apostle St. Matthias (always according to the Acts) does not acquire any superiority over his brethren; he is not consecrated by any ceremony whatever, and no jurisdiction whatever is conferred upon him. The title of apostle itself is not reserved exclusively to the twelve disciples of Jesus. Later on also Paul, Barnabas, and Silas call themselves, and are, apostles of the Lord.

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost descends upon all the disciples of Jesus without distinction and fills them with His gifts (Acts ii. 4), especially with the gift of tongues. If the apostles are seen displaying

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greater activity and outstripping all, that is due to the superior virtue, greater talent, and more intense enthusiasm which they possess. Their gifts of nature and grace distinguish them from their brethren, and render them superior to them, and not any right of pre-eminence given them by Jesus. According to the teaching of the Master, they are "first among equals" (*Primi inter pares*).

Accordingly, in the first chapters of the Acts the apostles are seen doing everything in accord among themselves and in common with the brethren. At that time brotherhood was perfect, and the Church of Jerusalem had the aspect of a clearly democratic society, whose members enjoyed equal rights and subjected themselves to the same burdens. When the apostles, as the Church increases, have no time to attend to the temporal wants of the community, and decide to accept some help, they propose to the brethren the election of seven deacons; and the choice of these is actually made by the whole community (Acts vi. 3 ff.).

The apostles hear that "Samaria has embraced the word of God," and send Peter and John to that country (Acts viii. 14).

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The collective government of the primitive Church is clearly shown by this fact also. Peter is sent by the other apostles; it is not he who sends, as supreme head of the companions and of the Church.

The Roman theologians want us to believe that from the earliest times the apostleship has been "a delegation of spiritual and social faculties conferred by Jesus in the beginning on the apostles exclusively," and therefore altogether depending on the authority that confers it. That, *much later on*, this conception came to dominate the Church is most certain; that it was current and common in the primitive Church is absolutely false. In fact, we learn from the Acts that, in the time of the apostles, many disciples preached the faith unknown to them, and that they more than once acknowledged the right of every Christian to preach, when internally moved to this by the Holy Ghost (Phil. i. 14-18; Acts viii. 2-4, xviii. 24-8, and elsewhere in several places). We have another conspicuous example in St. Paul, who, immediately after baptism, began to preach the faith without having been presented to the apostles to re-

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ceive his mission from them (Acts ix. 20 ff.). Only after three years of apostleship does he go to see Peter (Gal. i. 18). But he does not submit himself at all to him. He declares that "the apostles, who have been companions of Jesus, have not taught him anything" (Gal. ii. 6); that he is their inferior in nothing, and that to him it was committed to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, as to Peter to preach it to the Jews (Gal. ii. 7). St. Paul is so far from recognising any supremacy in Peter, that he does not hesitate to scold him publicly (Gal. ii. 11 ff.), and this at Antioch, of which Church, according to tradition, Peter was bishop. Now he who, according to Roman theologians, is the foundation of the Church and the Vicar of God on earth, eclipses himself before a man who had not known Jesus, and who had not received from him, or from any other apostle, his apostolic consecration. Now I ask: Would all this have been possible if the ideas of the monarchical episcopate which exist to-day in the Greek, Roman, and Russian Churches had prevailed in the apostolic Church? The Roman theologians triumphantly reply that

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the case of St. Paul is singular, because he received from Jesus Christ Himself the mission to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. Be it so. But then, from whom did Apollos, Barnabas, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, Simon, and many others, prophets and teachers, of whom mention is made in the Acts of the Apostles, receive their mission? They were converted, they felt inwardly inspired to preach, and they preached. Often they even founded new Churches, of which they remained the natural heads; that is, "first among the brethren." Perhaps some of those unknown preachers converted the first Jews and Gentiles of Rome, in which case, they, and not the two apostles Peter and Paul, would have the credit of being the first founders of that Church. Do not all these facts clearly show that the dependence, mission, and government of the ecclesiastical authority is a human fact, not a divine arrangement?

Speaking of St. Paul, what is to be said of his ordination, together with St. Barnabas, at the hands of the prophets and teachers of the Church of Antioch (Acts xiii. 1 ff.)? Were those prophets and teachers who laid

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their hands on Paul and Barnabas bishops? And if they were not bishops, what did their act signify? And the two apostles, were they ordained priests or bishops by them? And if Paul was only ordained a priest, then, for five or six years (for that number had passed since his conversion), he preached, baptized, and conducted the eucharistic service, as a simple layman. How is all this to be explained? And why was he not ordained by the apostles when, five years previously, he had been presented to them by St. Barnabas (Acts ix. 27); or by St. Peter when he went to visit him (Gal. i. 18)? This is not the place to answer all the above-mentioned questions. It might, however, be said, in general, that when Paul arrived at Antioch the body of prophets and teachers, as the most esteemed of all in that Church, had the care of it in their hands; therefore constituting, as a fact, a collective episcopate (*episcopus*, overseer), and as such, on its own authority, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, sent Paul and Barnabas to preach the Gospel in Cyprus and Pamphylia. Some years after, perhaps two or three, Paul and Barnabas, in their turn, assigned, with

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the same rite of imposition of hands, *elders* to every Church they had evangelised, recommending them to God (Acts xiv. 22). Here again the two apostles are to be seen establishing in every Church the order of elders, as was customary in Judaism, so that they should take care of the Churches they had founded. Were those "presbyters," or elders, on whom Paul and Barnabas imposed their hands, priests after the Roman fashion? Who will dare to assert this without sufficient proof?

Let us proceed. Divisions very soon made their way into the rising Church, and that on account of the ordinances of the law of Moses, which some judaizing Christians said should be observed, while others protested, on the contrary, that they were not necessary. To decide the question, the brethren were called to a special meeting, which, later on, the Church called a Council. Now that assembly was composed of apostles, elders, and brethren (Acts xv. 23), and consequently of the entire Christian people, or the majority of Christians, who were then in Jerusalem. Who commanded in that Council? Certainly not Peter; nor did James; if the first, so

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to say, opened it with a speech, the second formulated the letter which was afterwards sent to the brethren of Syria and Cilicia. Two classes are here named with greater honour: the apostles and elders, and this on account of the merits of the first and the age of the second; but it does not appear that either one or the other enjoyed special rights in that Council. The question of the ceremonies of the law is treated collectively (*collegialiter*); all possess an equal right to speak; and the decision is arrived at "by the apostles, elders, and all the Church" (Acts xv. 22). What a difference between the Council of Jerusalem and the last Councils of the Roman Church, where the Pope made and unmade everything!

Of course, equality of rank among the first Christians did not at all impede the existence of a diversity of offices among them, according to the capacity of each individual, the collective vote of the Christian community, and the gifts received from the Holy Ghost. St. Paul teaches that "God has constituted in the Church, first Apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, and then the gifts of healings, helps, governments,

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diversities of tongues ” (1 Cor. xii. 28). St. Paul places the apostleship in the same rank and order as the other above-mentioned gifts. *Therefore it is a talent, not a jurisdiction.* It is a power to do good, to instruct and enlighten the brethren, not primarily a right to command them, or a mission. All the offices mentioned by St. Paul are good and useful ; but none of them confers on him who fills it the least authority over his brethren, excepting in so far as the latter, seeing the gift of God in him, render him voluntary obedience. Charity is above all gifts (1 Cor. xiii.). Every one exercises his own gift as he likes, and, in the exercise of it, is not bound to submit to the commands of anybody. In this manner Silas, Judas, Paul, and Barnabas separate and go whither their will and fancy dictates, without any superior assigning a given territory to them. Besides, St. Paul, among the above-mentioned offices, does not mention bishops and elders (presbyters). Why is this ? Because, as we have said, elders and bishops are the same thing, and that not a talent or gift, but an office which, as its name implies, is connected chiefly with age, and age is a matter of necessity, not a

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moral qualification ; although undoubtedly moral qualifications were by no means disregarded in the selection of elders.

Thus, the apostles were not pontiffs, as the Roman theologians now assert ; but were brethren who assumed the most difficult and laborious office ; that is, the propagation of the Gospel. They were propagandists, and nothing more. St. Paul tells us that, as a rule, he did not baptize, and it is also probable that he did not usually preside at the eucharistic love-feast ; though nothing hinders the belief that he did so sometimes. The elders (in Greek *πρεσβύτεροι*, which many Romanists translate badly by the word priests), were the elders, or the oldest men, who administered the affairs of the community. The word bishop (*episcopus*), literally "inspector" is only to be found once in the Acts of the Apostles and there it is applied to the entire order of the elders, and not to one bishop alone at the head of the community, according to the fashion of the Roman Church. In the Acts of the Apostles (xx. 17) it is said that St. Paul, on arriving at Miletus, sent for the elders of the Church of Ephesus, and warned them

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against the doctrines of certain innovators who, after his departure, would enter Ephesus and play havoc with the flock, of which the Holy Ghost had constituted them “bishops,” that is, inspectors. Therefore, this title of bishop, which is now reserved to the chief of the priests, charged with the spiritual government of an entire province, belonged, in the time of the apostles, to all the elders of the Christian Church, so that, as St. Jerome says: “In the first centuries of the Church the presbytery and the episcopacy were but one and the same thing under two different names, one of which signifies age (presbyter), and the other office (bishop)” (St. Jerome, *Epist. ad Oceanum*). This is also the opinion of the ancient author of comments on the letters of St. Paul, known as St. Ambrose (*Ambrosii sive Hilarii Diaconi comment, in Ephes. iv.*). “To facilitate the conversion of the Pagans,” he says, “in the first days of the Church, all Christians were allowed to preach, baptize, and explain the Holy Scriptures in church. But no sooner was the Church propagated in every place and special Churches founded, than rectors were appointed and other permanent offices in each Church, so that who-

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ever had not been properly ordained was forbidden to exercise ecclesiastical offices in the Church." This is the real explanation. We see from the Acts and the scarce historical records of the primitive Church that it was then ruled by orders, or classes, not by individuals, and that all believers could baptize, preach, comment on the Scriptures, and preside at the eucharistic rite, or supper commemorating the passion of Jesus. Therefore, at that time, there was no intrinsic difference between priests and laymen. The intrinsic difference came later, much later, when mediæval theologians were induced, by a fact which can be explained in many ways, to assert that an indelible character and physical quality arose in the minds, or souls, of the priests by means of ordination. But this is a mediæval theological speculation. It has no foundation whatever in the Scriptures nor in primitive traditions.

Enough for the present, as this subject will be treated at length and expressly in another work.

Thus the Church, in its infancy, was directed by classes, not by individuals; that is to say, it was absolutely democratic. St. Paul

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writes to the saints in Jesus Christ who are at Philippi, together with the bishops and deacons (Phil. i. 1). Therefore in that Church the bishops were a class of the faithful ; the oldest, hence elders (presbyters), whose business it was to watch over the Christian community, so that it should walk with uprightness in the faith and life of Jesus. In respect of age *they were presbyters, or elders, by office they were bishops.* Therefore at that time there was not one only bishop at the head of the community, but it was ruled by bishops, prophets, teachers, evangelists, and such other believing men as were most distinguished by the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Even St. Paul himself, who perhaps was the first in the Church to manifest monarchical and episcopalian tendencies, properly so called, does not detach himself from a healthy spirit of democracy. In fact, even where he exercises authority he recognises, at the same time, that *jurisdiction belongs to the assembly of believers.* Thus, he condemns the incestuous person at Corinth, because “ he, Paul, anticipates the decision of the faithful into the midst of whom he transports himself in spirit and with whom he associates himself in the

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sentence" (1 Cor. v. 3). And when, later on, moved by the repentance of the sinner, he desires to readmit him to the Church, he begs the faithful to use indulgence and ratify his charity towards him (2 Cor. ii. 7-8). Hence it is seen that St. Paul puts in practice the command of Jesus, who desires that the Church, that is, the assembly of the faithful, shall be the last judge of all controversies and questions, of the condemnation and absolution of the brethren. In fact, He teaches thus: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. And if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more: that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily, I say to you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven" (St. Matt. xviii. 15-18). Thus, the Church, that is, the assembly of the faithful, binds and looses, that is to say, con-

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demns and absolves, and the head or heads of the Church bind and loose only in the name and by the authority of the Church. And is not this a real democratic government?

Indeed, God alone, as the Lord of the conscience He has given us, binds and looses as He speaks to our conscience in His Word and by His Spirit. But this being so, there are two reasons for the singular place given by Christ to the apostles in this matter: (a) They were divinely inspired to deliver to us the message of Christ, which, later on, consigned to writing, became what we will call the books of the New Testament. (b) Just as they could work miracles, so, to meet the singular need of the times, God gave them gifts of spiritual insight to which we cannot pretend. Yet in a subordinate sense the Church, through her ministers, still binds and looses, for as her ministers they preach the Word, and in so far as it takes effect the careless are awakened to a sense of sin, *i.e.* they are bound by the Word; and the burdened are filled with peace, *i.e.* they are loosed by the same Word. Yet He that binds and looses is not man, but God, speaking in His Word—God, the only Lord of the conscience.

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Presbyterianism is, therefore, the primitive Church organisation. It provides for the election by the congregations (and the setting apart by laying on of hands) of a class called indifferently elders or bishops, who are qualified to perform, *as representatives*, any and every spiritual act. Episcopacy denies this, saying in effect: "You may preach, you may rule a congregation, you may baptize, you may even consecrate the bread and wine of the Supper, but if you by yourselves lay hands on another the act is null and void, because you cannot confer your own orders." Monarchical Episcopacy is here reduced to its minimum, because the Roman and Greek Churches pretend to much more. Yet I venture to say that their claims are not to be found in the New Testament, nor are they apostolic. Of course, if a congregation is unable, through the failure of its Christian life, through strife or scandal, freely and normally to elect its own ministers, special provision may have to be made for it from some centre where life is still flourishing and active. Such we may take to have been the case of Crete; an exception, therefore, not the rule; yet even there it would be hard to find the

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minimum that monarchical Episcopacy demands. In conclusion: the primitive Church organisation was representative; therefore a representative democracy.

Summing up briefly what we have just said, the following facts stand as proof of the democratic government of the primitive Church:

(a) The Church of Jerusalem, mother and pattern of all Churches, where an absolutely collective and popular government existed.

(b) The existence in the Church of different ruling classes, to which, and not to one person alone, was entrusted the spiritual and temporal care of the community.

(c) The fact that when St. Polycarp wrote to the Philippians, about the year 110, he mentions the elders (presbyters) and deacons only, not the bishop, who, according to the Roman system, should have been at the head of that Church.

(d) Various genuine and other apocryphal letters, which, between the years 100 and 150, were written by certain Churches to other Churches, were *collective* letters, in which the community only appears, not the bishop: for instance, the letter from the

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Church of Rome to that of Corinth; the letter of the Church of Smyrna to that of Philomelium, etc.

(e) The *Didache* clearly leads to the supposition that the Christian community selected its own rulers.

(f) Two facts which would be equally strange and inexplicable in a society whose government was not entirely popular and democratic. The first most certain fact, which everybody knows, was the faculty which all Christians, whether priests or laymen, had of baptizing, that is, of adding new converts to the Church, and this independently of the heads of the Church. Now, when one thinks that the admission of a new member into a society is the highest and most authoritative act of its chief, one cannot understand how in the primitive Christian Church this faculty was granted to every single Christian, even servants, slaves, and women. This is inexplicable, except in an absolutely democratic society, whose government and whose jurisdiction is really vested in the entire community and in each single individual of the same. Such was the primitive government

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of the Christian Church. Still more, from scattered fragments of sub-apostolic literature, it seems clear that, until the year 100 or 120, any Christian, by permission of the community or its head, if there was one, and also without it, could preside at the eucharistic supper, and celebrate the sacred mysteries; moreover, any pious and devout Christian, endowed with spiritual gifts (*charismata*), although not priest or bishop, might release his fellow brethren from the burden of sin. This is clearly attested by St. Hippolytus in his *Philosophoumena*, by Origen in *De Oratione*, by Tertullian in *De Pudicitia*, and elsewhere. Finally, the office connected with the position of elder, priest, or bishop was not necessarily perpetual, but might cease altogether, or be taken up or laid down by turns. It seems that this fact can also be deduced from the letters of St. Polycarp to the Philippians.

(g) The fact narrated by St. Jerome, that in the early times the presbyters of Alexandria appointed their own bishop; whence it might be deduced that, in the time of the apostles, that Church, like many others, was ruled by a college of equal presbyters.

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(h) That which St. Epiphanius attests, viz. that “in the apostolic age there were Churches which had priests without bishops, and Churches that had bishops and no priests.”

(i) The universal fact, touched upon here and there in the apostolic literature, that every Christian acquired a kind of right to rule those whom he converted from heathenism or Judaism; hence also the formation of little groups of Christians under their own apostle or evangelist, who was priest, bishop, and everything to them.

(k) Another equally universal fact, that in nearly all the Churches, including the apostolic, the tradition of the succession of the first bishops, after the apostles, is very doubtful, or even quite mendacious; in like manner it has been sought to trace back to apostolic times, or thereabouts, the foundation of many Churches of Italy and France, and this has been conclusively disproved by the historical criticism of many learned modern writers. This can be said even of the Church of Rome, of whom the real founder, or very first preacher, is unknown; it is not known what relations existed between Peter and

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Paul, or between them and the Church of Rome; and, above all, there is much obscurity as to who were their immediate successors.

(1) To all this another historical fact may be added, difficult to explain where the theory of a monarchical Episcopate existing from the very beginning of the Church is held, but easily explained when it is maintained that the first ecclesiastical government was in the hands of a class, not of an individual. It is that in many Churches, even in some of the principal and apostolic Churches, we find, at the time of the apostles, or immediately after, two or three bishops, who, according to tradition, were ordained by the apostles themselves and placed at the head of the government. Thus we have at Rome Linus and Anacletus, and, according to others, Clement also, all three ordained by St. Peter; at Jerusalem St. James, who, together with the apostles, as Hegesippus says, governed that Church; at Antioch Evodius and Ignatius sitting together, as we learn from Baronius and others, in the same episcopal chair; at Athens Dionysius, Publius, and Quadratus, ordained by the apostles; and

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the same in other Churches, especially in France, Italy, and Asia Minor. The Roman theologians explain this fact by saying that the apostles, not being able to remain always in one place, ordained two or three elders as bishops, who, however, were not to govern together, but to succeed one another when the place became vacant. Others say that the apostles did this to prevent schisms from arising in the Church after their death; Baronius, however, is of opinion that "one of the bishops ministered to the Christians converted from Judaism; the other, when there were two, was bishop of the Christians of Gentile race." And when there were three? I ask. All these explanations are fanciful, and agree badly with the Acts and the letters of St. Paul. May it not be said, instead, that the apostles established two, three, or more elders at the head of every Church, so that the government of the Churches according to divine ordination should be democratic and collective; that is, by classes? And then, would not this explain very well St. Paul's command to Titus, that is, to ordain elders (presbyters) for the different cities of Crete, who a little

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further on are described by the apostle as bishops?

But, it is said, the letters of St. Ignatius forbid the acceptance of that interpretation. They show that, at the beginning of the second century the monarchical Episcopate already existed in the Church. I answer, though Bishop J. B. Lightfoot and many critics accept the above-mentioned letters as authentic, nevertheless many others still refuse them. And rightly. In fact, they are very much weakened, if they have not lost all authority, by the multiplicity of texts and varying readings. Certainly nobody would accept a "will" as genuine of which three texts existed, quite different from one another, and full of various readings besides. Such is the state of the letters attributed to St. Ignatius. But, supposing them to be genuine, it can be said that the earnestness with which he exhorted the faithful to submit to their own bishop shows that the monarchical Episcopate was a new thing, which was just then being introduced into the Church, and found resistance from those who appealed to an anterior tradition. And perhaps this was the reason of the intestine struggles in the

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Church of Corinth, to tranquillise which the Church of Rome got Clement to write the famous and most obscure letter, on which it does not do to insist too much, because, to three texts which can be interpreted in an episcopalian sense, many others, much clearer, can be opposed which seem to favour the presbyterian interpretation; as also the fact that, in the letter written by the Church of Rome to that of Corinth, the bishop of the latter is never mentioned. Was there a bishop at Corinth when Clement wrote? Or was he dead? Or was the government in the hands of the order of elders (bishops) against whom the juniors had rebelled? (1 Clem. iii. 3).

But, supposing also that the letter in question has come down to us free from corruption and substantial alterations, it is still certain that it openly and explicitly favours Presbyterianism rather than the episcopal system. In fact, Clement speaks of, or rather alludes to, our subject-matter only in the chapters i., xxi., xlii., xliv., xlvii., liv, lvii., and in all of them, as the learned Abbé Fouard remarks, "Clement does not seem to have before his eyes anything but a collective body of elders or

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pastors, governing the Christian community.”¹ In fact, in chap. i. Clement thus speaks: “You, O Corinthians, did everything most impartially and without discrimination of persons, walking in the holy commandments of God, subject to your chiefs [*prepositors*] and giving to your elders the honour which was due to them.” Abbé Fouard remarks about this that the word *ἡγούμενοι* (*prepositors*, chiefs), being in the plural, does not mean that, at Clement’s time, there was at Corinth a bishop properly so-called, *i.e.* an only chief or head of the Church; on the contrary, that word very likely denotes a small group of elders, chosen from amongst the body of pastors (*τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις*) in order to direct and govern in common the Christian brotherhood of Corinth.²

Again, in chap. xlii. Clement expresses himself as follows: “Preaching [the apostles] through villages and cities, they chose those that had been the first-fruits of their apostleship, and made them bishops and deacons of those who, later on, should believe.” And in chap. xliv., “Our apostles,

¹ C. Fouard, *Saint Jean et la fin de l'Age Apostolique*, p. 201.

² Abbé Fouard, *ibid.* p. 192.

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enlightened by our Lord Jesus Christ, knew that altercations would rise about and because of the title of bishop. In order to prevent these disputes, induced to it by their prophetic knowledge, they designated those whom we named above, and ordered moreover that, after their death, other well-trying men should succeed to their ministry. Therefore we think it unlawful and unjust to deprive of their office men who have been appointed to it by the apostles and by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole Church whom they served without blame, in all humility, peace, and generosity, and to whose good lives all brethren, for a long time, have testified. We cannot, without rendering ourselves guilty of a grievous sin, reject those men who have worthily and piously offered the holy oblations.”

Dr. Rauschen, on the contrary, joining together chaps. xli. and xlii., thus sums up the sentences which concern the succession in the so-called Episcopate: “The apostles, preaching in villages and cities, established the best of their proselytes as bishops and deacons of those who had believed, and ordered that, after their death, other well-

tried men should succeed to their office. Therefore, *we are not to be blamed if we place in the Episcopate those that have holily, and without faults, offered the sacrifice.*"¹ Is this mistranslation to be imputed to Dr. Rauschen, or to his Florentine editor? In what part of the text does our author find the italicised words? They do not exist at all. Clement says this only, that "it was unlawful and unjust to deprive of their office the elders of whom he speaks, and that the Corinthians might not, without sin, reject men who had worthily and piously offered the holy oblations." And he says all this, as appears from the context, in the name of the Church of Corinth, and speaking the language of those amongst the Corinthians who had risen in defence of their persecuted elders: he does not speak in his own name, or in the name of the Roman Church. Moreover, his assertion is negative, not positive, as Rauschen says, or his Florentine editor makes him say, which makes no little difference; because, in the former case, the words might be interpreted of *the election and assumption*

¹ Dr. Gerhard Rauschen, *Manuale di Patrologia*, pp. 37, 38. Firenze, 1904.

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to the *Episcopate*; in the latter case, only of the defence and rehabilitation of the accused elders. In conclusion, chap. xlv., if misinterpreted by Dr. Rauschen or his Florentine editor, indicates somewhat definitely the episcopalian theory; if interpreted in its obvious and literal sense, it means pure and simple Presbyterianism, which is likewise taught by chaps. i., xxi., xlvii., liv., and lvii.

All this reasoning renders three conclusions more than probable: I. The first government of the Church, or that which prevailed at Jerusalem and in the Churches depending on it, was democratic and collective. II. A sole and unique ecclesiastical government was not the usage in the Churches; but, according to circumstances, the apostles established now one thing, now another, for the benefit of the faithful. III. Collective government, however, was the ideal government, in imitation of the apostolic college and of the Church of Jerusalem.

And here it is to be noted that Roman theologians, in their syllogisms, often presuppose that the Church fell from heaven exactly as it is at present, and that, from the very beginning, it has been the same

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and uniform in everything all over the earth. Nothing could be more false. The Church, from Pentecost until the death of St. John, and even afterwards, kept continually developing—that is, changing—nor was it ever identical and uniform in all parts of the world. Such uniformity of the primitive Church, in its dogmas and religious practices, always excepting the essentials, is a dream of the Roman theologians, not historical reality. Christian Churches varied from one place to another, from one nation to another, in secondary things, such as the language of worship, the number of ministers, the authority of the heads, the form of liturgy, the eucharistic consecration, the method of charity, the fashion of the liturgical dress, the celebration of Easter, the sacred music; in fasting, in watching, in the number of the sacred books, in penance, in the symbolic signs or rites of grace, in the form of asceticism, and in a thousand other particulars. Therefore they varied also in the form of government. Some Churches enjoyed a perfectly democratic rule; others had a paternal government; some possessed a kind of oligarchical government. Brotherhood, however, and the love of Jesus reigned in them all.

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Despite all this, there is no doubt that very soon indeed they began to introduce a monarchical Episcopate into the Church. Here the questions arise: Is this a divine or apostolic institution? and when did they begin to introduce it into the Church? To these questions Tertullian replies by asserting that "St. John was the founder of the episcopal order." "Ordo episcoporum, ad originem recensensus in Joannem stabit auctorem" (*Adversus Marcionem*, lib. iv. cap. 5). The same is also asserted by other ancient writers. However, I am of opinion that St. Jerome gives the real origin of the monarchical episcopate, for he constantly teaches that "in the first times the priesthood and episcopate were one and the same thing, and before a diabolical instinct caused parties to arise in the Church, saying, I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Peter, *the Churches were governed by the common council of the elders.* But inasmuch as everybody considered that the new Christians whom he had baptized belonged to him alone, it was arranged everywhere that one elder should be elected, who, placed above the others, would take care of that Church, and thus the seeds of

schism were extirpated." The holy doctor then brings forward many texts of the holy Scripture to prove that in ancient times the priests were called bishops, and then he thus concludes: "As the priests know themselves to be subject to the bishops merely because it is a custom in the Church; so the bishops know that they are superior to the priests through ecclesiastical custom and not through divine disposition: and therefore they should rule the Church in common with the priests."¹ The theologian, Michael Medina, asserts that this opinion of St. Jerome was also that of Saints Ambrose, Augustine, John Chrysostom, Theodoret, and many other ancient Fathers (*Dissertationum Ecclesiastic.* lib. i. cap. 3).

Saint Jerome expresses the same ideas in several of his other writings, and is followed in this by ancient and mediæval doctors. Thus, according to St. Jerome, the origin of the monarchical Episcopate was not divine, but human; that is to say, suggested, not by the historical record of Christ, but by necessities which had arisen, and to obviate the evil fruits of human passions. Nor is this theory of St. Jerome

¹ St. Jerome, *Epist. Divi Pauli ad Tit.* i. 5 ff.

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contradicted by what is written in the letters of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus, in the letters of St. Clement and those of St. Ignatius in the *Pastor Hermæ*, nor by the fact that, after A.D. 150, we find the monarchical Episcopate firmly established in the larger Churches of the world. They do not contradict, I say, because some of those texts are open to another explanation ; some are terribly obscure and full of variations ; and then all can be answered by conceding that in this or that Church the monarchical Episcopate was established very early, as St. Jerome himself asserts, and that the above-mentioned texts refer to those Churches, and not to the universal Church. If from the year 100 to 140 the Churches of Rome, Corinth, and Antioch had adopted the government of one only bishop, as head of the community, does it necessarily follow that all the Churches of the world had done the same ? This would follow if the government of the Church had been distinctly and minutely established by Jesus Christ ; it would not follow if this had been left to the free will of the apostles and of the Church.

Now, as even the Jesuit Cornelius à Lapede admits, according to the evidence of

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the ancient Fathers, "Jesus did not regulate everything in His Church, but as regards the government of the same He conceded to the apostles and their successors the right to establish whatever they believed would be most useful to it, as times should change and new needs arise. This is required for the prudent foundation of every republic, and this St. Paul attests when he says: "This I have established for thee . . . these are my commands . . . such my orders'" (Cornelii à Lapide, *In Divi Pauli Epistulas; Epistula ad Titum*, cap. i. verse 5, p. 661. Lugduni, 1732).

This theory is also supported by reason. In fact, it is clear that in the Church of Jerusalem, whilst all the apostles were there together, its government was in the hands of the whole apostolic college. But when the apostles were dispersed, and every one of them had founded several Churches, it is quite natural that in those first years the bulk of the affairs should remain in their hands, so that the apostle who founded a Church was its chief. It is scarcely credible that newly made Christians, often uncultured and rude, should always at once constitute a republican or democratic

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government. In those circumstances the paternal government is the most natural, though it may be that in civilised countries the Christian community immediately governed itself. But as the Church increased, whether in the number of the faithful or in the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the apostle-founder left for other regions to convert new Gentiles to the faith, the Church remained in charge of the elders, who, as we have seen above, formed a kind of committee and governed it democratically, with a common council as colleagues. Afterwards, as fervour diminished, disagreements arose here and there, and, to put an end to them, the apostolic founder of the Church, or rather, of the Christian community, by virtue of his authority, imposed on this or that community an elder above all the others. Thus it is explained why, in certain Churches, the signs of the monarchical Episcopate appeared very early, whilst in others the democratic government continued undisturbed. Nobody can make anything of the primitive documents if he sets about reading them with the preconception that one only form of government must prevail in every Church. On the con-

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trary, he who rightly supposes that in this, as in many other things, the Churches were not all uniform, will be able to solve the many enigmas that come in his way. In this manner, little by little, after the death of the apostles (and perhaps even before, in certain places) monarchical government was introduced into the Church ; first very mildly, so that, as the ancient Fathers testify, there was hardly any difference between bishops and priests ; afterwards the authority of the bishops was more felt, though they were still elected by the priests, by the neighbouring bishops, and the people, and this through divine ordination, as taught by St. Cyprian ; finally, the bishop arrogated to himself a nearly absolute, and in some places even a despotic, authority over the people and clergy, and the universal Church was gradually transformed into an oligarchy first, in which the lay faithful were nearly banished from the government, and then into an absolute monarchy, in which the Pope is all, whilst bishops are of little account, priests of still less, and laymen of none whatsoever.

Such is the actual government of the Roman Church. But it is not of divine origin ; human

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certainly, and very human. The primitive Church of Jesus was a great brotherhood, a great democracy, a great society, whose members had an active and passive voice, elected their own superiors, and in their turn were elected to all the offices of the Church. Such, and no other, was the primitive Church of Jesus Christ.

In defence of the divine authority of the hierarchy, the Roman theologians appeal to the words of our Lord: "He that heareth you, heareth Me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me: and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me" (Luke x. 16). But wrongly. These words were spoken by Jesus to the seventy disciples whom He sent on a temporary mission within the boundaries of Judea: thus they concern those disciples only, and cannot be applied to others. Furthermore, He gave power to the same seventy to heal the sick, to cast out devils, to tread with impunity upon serpents, and in St. Matthew, in a somewhat parallel passage addressed to the apostles, He also conferred on the latter the faculty of raising the dead. Does the Roman hierarchy possess all those faculties? Thus, the mission entrusted to the

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seventy disciples was temporary, not permanent. So, at least, we may infer from the fact that the apostles themselves were by no means infallible, and could not work miracles at will. Later on the Twelve are incapable of casting out devils (Matt. xvii. 14-19), they often fall into error, are deficient in judgment (John xiv. 9), they refuse to resign themselves to the prospect of the death of Jesus (Luke xviii. 31-4), which they do not think necessary: thus the apostles, and much more the seventy disciples, did not yet understand the Christianity which their Master was preaching. Thus the words which Jesus addressed to the latter, when sending them on a temporary mission, cannot be applied to the catholic hierarchy, as Roman theologians assert; and the gifts conferred upon them ceased with their mission. By what right, then, can they claim to have them perpetuated in the hierarchy?

They also bring forward the text we have already cited: "If thy brother shall offend against thee," etc. (Matt. xviii. 15-18). But Jesus laid this duty on all the disciples in general, even on the women who habitually followed Him (Luke viii. 2; xxiii.

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49), and not on the apostles only. By obliging the faithful to submit their disputes to the Church, that is, to the assembly and multitude of his followers, Jesus clearly founded democracy in the Church. Therefore, by detaching the eighteenth verse from the context and applying it to the apostles only, while it is addressed to all the Church, theologians commit a manifest mistake and completely change the nature of the thought and words of Jesus.

Another text is brought forward: "And, behold, I am with you always, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20). The Roman theologians try to prove, with these words, that Jesus will be *with the hierarchy* to the end of the world, and that therefore it must be blindly obeyed, as that which commands and speaks in the name of God. On this point the following will be observed by the reader: (a) These words were spoken by Jesus at His last appearance in Galilee, which had been promised by Him from the first day of His resurrection, and at which a great number of persons were present, perhaps more than five hundred (1 Cor. xv. 6). Therefore Jesus addressed

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these words to the whole Church, not to the apostles only. Now it is beyond doubt that Jesus is ever present to all the Church in spirit, and with His assistance, therefore, it cannot err in the fundamental things of Christianity. (b) This text is parallel with the other which says: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20); from which it is evident that the promise of Jesus, referred to above, is not limited to the hierarchy, but it is extended to all those who, even if few in number, gather together in the name and spirit of Jesus.

There remains the famous text of the promise and benediction bestowed by Jesus on St. Peter, which promise is the great point with the Roman theologians. Of this promise we have spoken at great length in the third chapter. Here I will only add that the words spoken to St. Peter, "And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 19), are evidently parallel to the words addressed to all the disciples, that is, to all the Church,

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cited by the same Matthew (xviii. 18) : I say to "all the Church" because the eighteenth verse cannot be detached from the verses that precede it. These say that the Church, that is, the assembly of the faithful, is supreme judge of all disputes and controversies that arise among the brethren. Now, to judge, absolve, and condemn, is, in the language of Jesus, "to loosen and to bind," which He grants to the disciples, that is, to the Church. In every case it is not Peter's special privilege, but is common to all the apostles. It is true, nevertheless, that, as not a few ancient Fathers note, Jesus in chap. xvi. 19 directs His promise to Peter in particular because, "as he was furnished with more spiritual gifts, and showed greater zeal than the rest of the Twelve, He considered him as the representative of His future Church," not because by authority he was superior to the other apostles : and we have already heard St. Cyprian confirming this by saying that "the other apostles were that which St. Peter was, enjoying the same honour and equal power" (*De Unitate Ecclesie*).

"But," say the Romanists, "you grant that

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the monarchical Episcopate is of apostolic institution: therefore it is of divine institution, because the apostles worked under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost." Do not go too fast, I answer. That the apostles, to avoid local disorder in some Churches, imposed on the community the government of one person only I grant as probable (mark, probable, not at all certain); that they founded the monarchical Episcopate in the universal Church I decidedly deny. In fact, even if the Episcopate were founded by the apostles, it does not at all follow that it is of divine origin. The apostles were men, they were not God. But they are infallible, it is said. And I reply, This is a question not of infallibility, but whether the apostles in giving to this or that particular Church a monarchical, paternal, collective, or aristocratic government, were moved by instructions received from Jesus, or followed their own lights. In the first case, that government is of divine origin and institution; in the second, it is a human institution. I reject the first, at least in the Roman sense, and I grant the second. Then, as regards the infallibility of the

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apostles, I ask some proof of it. There is not a vestige of it in the Acts, Epistles, and Gospels. Who, then, is responsible for it? This much I know: that St. Paul resists St. Peter and does not agree with him; St. Peter finds in St. Paul's writings obscure things; and certainly the two apostles differ in gifts of nature and grace; they hesitate to interpret the spirit of Jesus; the disciples of Peter, Paul, and Apollos dispute among themselves and form differing parties or schools,—does not all this demonstrate that the pretended concord of the apostles in all things, and their infallibility, are a myth? The answer is given: “But at Pentecost they received the Holy Ghost, who filled them with all His gifts.” Most true; but did He make them infallible also? The Holy Ghost descended equally upon all who were in the “upper room,” many women included. Did they all become equally infallible? Further, I grant that the apostles were in perfect accord on all that constitutes the essence of faith in Jesus Christ. The Apostolic Creed, which goes back to the first years of the second century, bears testimony to what I say. But who can assure us that

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there were no differences among them on secondary points of Christian doctrine? What a different savour the letters of St. Paul have from those of Peter, James, or John, from the letter to the Hebrews, the Apocalypse, the doctrine of the Acts, and the theological theories of the fourth Gospel! Does not all this show that the apostles maintained their individuality, their manner of thinking, and their own judgment, even after receiving the Holy Ghost, and this not only in the practical things of life, which is granted, but also on those points of doctrine which Jesus had not explicitly expounded? Moreover, I repeat, even conceding infallibility in doctrine, does it follow that everything they ordered for the good of the Church was a command of Jesus Christ, and therefore divine? St. Paul clearly distinguishes his own from the divine commands. If he makes a distinction between them, of course they are not the same. If St. Paul finds a difference between the one and the other, what is to prevent us from finding it also? The difference is that those which proceed from Christ are divine; those which proceed from Paul are human. Among those human,

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not divine arrangements, is included the monarchical Episcopate, established perhaps by some apostle, not in the universal Church, but in this or that Christian community because the want of upright elders, respected by the society of the faithful, or the scant civilisation of the converted people, rendered it necessary. This may have occurred in the island of Crete, where Paul left his disciple Titus: though it may also have been the intention of the apostle that Titus should establish the Christian community in the usual fashion on the island, that is, under the rule of elders. This seems to be the clearest meaning of Titus i. 5. In this case, rather than being bishop of the Cretans, Titus would have been their vice-apostle, left there by St. Paul to organise the Church. Therefore, he must not be taken as the first link in the episcopal chain of the island; rather, he made the first link to the chain, and that chain was not a series of individual links, but rather a succession of committees of elders, the first of which was established by Titus by the order of St. Paul.

Under these circumstances, how, and why,

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has it come to pass that the Church, from being democratic, has been transformed by degrees into an absolute monarchy?

From what I have said up to this point the reader will be in a position to give a positive and clear answer to the two questions put above. The transformation is a human development, due to human causes, not to divine intervention. It might also be a degeneration from the divine ideal instead of a perfecting of it. If the Church had preserved its first form of government perhaps all the world would now be Christian. At present the non-Christians are in the majority, and the non-Roman Catholics outnumber by eighteen millions those who accept the absolute monarchy of Rome. How is all this to be explained, after nineteen hundred years of Christianity? Has not the Christian Church, perhaps, spent its energy and spiritual life in intestine wars which arose from ignorance, greed of absolute power, and fanaticism, instead of earnestly applying itself to the conversion of the world? Do I in this condemn the monarchical Episcopate? Not at all. It may well be a legitimate form of government in the Church really intended by Jesus Christ

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our Lord, useful to this or that Church in particular, but to be all this the bishop must be "the servant of the servants of God"; let it not be said that the monarchical Episcopate, to the exclusion of every other form of government, is a divine institution; and let not Roman theologians attribute to the priesthood physical qualities which Jesus Christ never gave it, but which were invented by man in one of the lowest periods of human evolution.

It must not be thought, however, that the authority of the Church perished on this account. It must be borne in mind that the hierarchy is for the use of the Church, not the Church for that of the hierarchy. As in civil governments the form matters little if the administration is good and tends to make society, that is the citizens, more prosperous, contented, educated, and happy, so the form of the ecclesiastical government is not of great importance when the ends Jesus had in view in founding His Church are obtained: that is, when men are led to the Father, through the knowledge of the Son, and the practice of the Christian life.

CHAPTER XI

THE FLORENTINE, THE TRIDENTINE, AND THE VATICAN COUNCILS

I HAVE reserved for this last chapter an objection to my doctrine which, from the Roman standpoint, is capital indeed. You are attacking (Roman divines will say) the constitution of the Church, which, according to the whole Catholic Church, is monarchical. The Councils of Florence and of the Vatican, and indirectly that of Trent, have declared that the Catholic Church is a monarchy, at the head of which is the Bishop of Rome. Those three Councils were Ecumenical, and have settled the matter once for all. They represented the whole Church, and the whole Church is bound to submit and accept their definitions as dogmas of faith.

I purpose in this chapter to discuss this difficulty fully; to inquire, namely, whether

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the three Councils of Florence, of Trent, and the Vatican were really such as to command the interior assent of all Christians. Not that I believe that even a General Council can oblige the Christian *absolutely*; for only God is Lord of the conscience, and only God is infallible. Councils have erred; hence the position of Athanasius: *contra mundum*. There will always be the appeal from the Council to God, speaking in His Word, and the question will always be of the true sense of Scripture. But if the Council persuades me that the truth is other than I had thought, the Council becomes to me the minister of truth; yet, even so, I bow not to the decrees of the Council *as such*, but to the truth of which the Council has convinced me, *i.e.* to God alone.

However, to pave the way to my discussion, I ask the reader's kind permission to introduce a few general remarks about the Councils of Constance and Basel, and about the various means by which the Papacy attained to that supremacy which was crowned in 1870 by the Vatican definition of the Pope's infallibility.

The constitution of the Roman Church is

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now certainly monarchic ; nay, more, it is a monarchy of an absolute type, tempered only by the good-will of the Pope ; for the Pope does and undoes everything. The facility, for instance, with which he changes the bishops from one see to another is simply marvellous ; yet, in ancient times, the bishops were deemed to be the husbands of their Churches, and as such bound to the same till death parted them. Now, in the Roman system, they are the mere servants of the Pope, especially in Italy, where he is absolute master. Assuredly, the Pope is the master, the cardinals, the bishops, and the priests are his most obedient servants, and all of them together (always excepted, amongst the bishops and priests, those who have an opinion of their own) make up the Church. The Catholic laity, and that part of the clergy who do not profess blind obedience towards the Pope, count for less than nothing.

A very different opinion, indeed, about the constitution of the Church was entertained by the Fathers of the two Councils of Constance and of Basel. In the eyes of those two Councils the Pope was far from being the absolute sovereign of an absolute mon-

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archy, but was rather esteemed to be the federal head of a great republic of Churches, bound together by the link of the same faith and the bond of the same love in our Lord. This doctrine about the constitution of the Church was maintained in a great number of scholarly papers and books by the most celebrated doctors of that time: some from the University of Paris, as the famous Chancellor Gerson, others from the Italian and German Universities.

“Those two Councils were revolutionary, and therefore have no authority at all,” say the Roman divines; “the Church of Rome never accepted their decrees about the constitution of the Church and the power of her head, the Pope.” My answer is: Those two councils were real, genuine, and honest Councils. That there was some fighting and disorderly behaviour on the part of a few I readily grant; that they were revolutionary Councils I simply deny. To be sure, some hot discussion and contest is hardly avoidable in a vast assembly of men who are really free to talk and act as they please. Now, the Councils of Constance and Basel were *perfectly free*, not under the thumb of the Papacy, as the later Councils,

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chiefly the Florentine, the Tridentine, and the Vatican were. They *represented the whole Church*, at least the whole of the Latin Church, not one part only, because all Christian nations sent their envoys, and enjoyed the same number of votes, which were not by head, or personal ballot, but by nation ; whereas at Florence, at Trent, and at Rome the “one man, one vote” rule was re-established, which immediately reversed the tables in favour of the Papacy. For, in the last-named Councils, the Fathers were mostly Italians, or otherwise dependent on the Pope, thus crushing with their votes the small protesting minority. Finally, the best scholars of Christendom were present at Basel and Constance, where likewise all, or almost all, the Universities of Europe were duly represented ; whereas at Florence, at Trent, and in the Vatican, the Fathers who were really learned were a small minority, the less learned, nay, often the ignorant, formed the overwhelming majority. The Church of France and all other Churches of the Christian world respected and venerated the Councils of Basel and Constance and immediately accepted their decisions ; whereas the acceptance, by all Churches, of the

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Councils of Florence and Trent took a good deal of time and much diplomacy on the part of Rome. But Rome, at last, triumphed over all opposition. Indeed it took till 1870 to get the Pope's infallibility and supremacy over the whole Church defined ; but finally Rome triumphed over truth, history, and Christian tradition, owing to the consummate arts of her diplomacy, to the wonderful political genius of some of her Popes, to the constancy of her purpose, to the intrigues of her Court, to the supine ignorance of most Christian bishops ; and last, but not least, Rome gained the contest owing to her alliance in those days with the State in most Christian countries. The Pope is now the recognised chief of over 250 millions of Christians, and most of his bishops and priests firmly believe in the divine right of the Pope to sit supreme on the throne which historical circumstances have raised for him on the Vatican hill.

The historical and very human circumstances and contrivances which concurred to make the Papacy supreme may be summed up as follows :

(a) The creation of permanent Nuncios at the various Catholic Courts, whose duty was

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to keep up by all means the prestige of the Papacy and to inform the Vatican as to the opinions for or against Rome held by candidates to the Episcopate.

(*b*) The foundation of the Society of Jesus, a true prætorian body-guard of the Pope. The Jesuits, scattered all over the world, preach for ever the prerogatives of the Papacy, teach the claims of the Pope in their schools, defend them in their books or from the pulpit, and keep Rome well informed about any attempt against her spiritual authority, and also about the opinions and qualities of those persons, laymen and ecclesiastics, whose value Rome wants to estimate.

(*c*) The establishment of a great number of religious bodies and congregations, male as well as female, not dependent on the local bishops, but exclusively on the Vatican, and therefore devoted to the Papacy to the last drop of their blood.

(*d*) The firm resolution, on the part of Rome, never to raise to the episcopal chair men whose attachment to the Holy See was not absolutely certain and proved beyond doubt; so that, between two men, one good and learned, the other less so, but more

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attached to Rome, the choice falls invariably, if Rome can have its way, on the latter.

(*e*) The creation of seminaries and colleges for the education of the clergy. Although these institutions are in themselves good and useful, yet they have become, in the hands of the Papacy, in the course of time one of the most powerful means for producing a host of priests and bishops wholly attached to itself in spite of truth and of higher spiritual interests. The method whereby this is effected is very simple. The seminarists are forbidden to attend the lectures at the public Universities, so that they grow up quite ignorant of any culture which is not strictly ecclesiastical. They are given the use of a very few books only, and such as are brim-full of papal prerogatives, ignore the difficulties of the learned against the exaggerated claims of the Papacy, have no critical spirit, and abound in fables and in manifold distortions of truth. Upon such books the minds of the young clergy of the Roman Church are formed. When they leave the seminary they know, or rather have a few notions of, a certain kind of history, philosophy, and theology, which have been adapted, pre-arranged, and edited just for the

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seminaries, i.e. *ad usum delphini*, who in this case are the seminary students. Of course, what we say must be applied chiefly to the clergy of the Latin nations, for Austria and Germany, and, to a certain extent, also the Anglo-Saxon countries, fare better in this respect.

(f) The establishment of the Roman congregations, whereby the prestige of the Papacy grew immeasurably and which contributed to the virtual abolition of the rights of the Primate, rendering the Archbishops worse than useless, since the bishops, priests, and faithful have recourse to Rome even for the minutest things, and not only for the *causæ majores*, as was directed by the ancient Canons.

(g) The foundation of clerical papers, often subsidised by the Holy See or by the local bishops, encouraged by autograph letters from the Pope, and helped financially with thousands of payments for masses. This way of subsidising clerical papers was much in favour at the Vatican at the time of Pope Pius IX. and Leo XIII. It has somewhat abated now under the government of the reigning Pontiff. But it is not the desire for political influence

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that is lacking, it is money that is scarce. It need not be said that these clerical papers know no other interest but the exaltation of the Holy See.

(h) The creation of a peculiar kind of theology, philosophy, history, and ascetics, which tend almost instinctively to exalt and magnify, out of proportion with the rest of Christian dogmas, the Holy Church, which, as a matter of fact, is nothing and no one else but the Pope and the Holy See.

(i) The placing on the *Index Expurgatorius* of a great number of books which, in the early centuries of the Church, would have circulated not only without scandal to the faithful, but to their edification. Now, on the contrary, they are prescribed as infected with Protestantism, Gallicanism, Febronianism, Liberalism, and the like.

(k) The condemnation, through the Syllabus, of the whole modern world, uttered with the greatest solemnity by Pope Pius IX. and repeatedly renewed by Leo XIII. and Pius X. In fine, the constant appealing of the Popes to the Councils of Florence, of Trent, and of the Vatican, as to the General Councils that settled once for all the grade, the dignity, and the

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authority of the Bishops of Rome over the rest of Christendom.

Now the question is, were the three aforesaid Councils really Ecumenical? Of course, when the *whole Church* (morally, of course, not materially) *freely* meets in a General Council, and there proclaims some Christian truth as appertaining to the deposit of the Christian faith brought down from heaven by our Lord Jesus Christ, its definitions, although not binding on all Christians, are nevertheless worthy of consideration, and may be taken as the genuine interpretation of Holy Writ and the true explanation of the primitive faith. But did the three Councils of Florence, of Trent, and of the Vatican realise these conditions? Were they absolutely free? Did they represent the whole Church?

First of all, did the Council of Florence, held in 1439 under Pope Eugenius IV., represent the whole Church? Who dares affirm it without discrimination? The French prelates—all but one, who was not subject to the jurisdiction of the French King—kept entirely away from the Council. Another large part of the teaching Church, headed

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by cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, with hundreds of priests and learned laymen, not only did not join the Council at Florence, but continued, in spite of papal remonstrances, to sit at the Council of Basel. Moreover, most of the Greek bishops consented to the union with Rome, and signed the decrees which established the supremacy of the Pope—reluctantly, not sincerely, but feignedly, moved thereto only by the authority of the Greek Emperor, who hoped, through the union, to get from the Pope and from the Latin Princes a strong subsidy in money, and some help in men, to enable him to make a stand against the Turkish armies, which threatened to bring his ill-fated empire to its last hour. In fact, no sooner had the Greek bishops returned home than they publicly renounced the union with Rome, as having been extorted from them and in no way freely granted. But this is not all. Even supposing the bishops had remained faithful to their Florentine engagement, they would not have really represented the Greek Church. In this case the bishops, who at that Council represented their Churches, who testified to the faith of their Churches, and

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voted in the name of their Churches, by signing the Act of Union with Rome, would have committed to the union nobody but themselves alone. In fact, they were considered by the Greek people at home as apostates and traitors. The Greek Church was then, as she is now, intensely hostile to the Papacy; she believed then, as she believes now, the primacy of the Pope to be a usurpation contrary to holy Scripture, to the ancient Canons, and to primitive tradition. Hence it is that all the Greek people, the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, and most of the bishops, only a few excepted, then and afterwards rejected the Council of Florence as void of any authority, null, and not Ecumenical.

The Gallican Church adopted the same attitude to the Florentine Council. She refused to accept it as canon law for almost three hundred years, so that in 1563, *i.e.* 124 years after the Council, the French Cardinal of Lorraine, at the Council of Trent, protested that "he, having imbibed at the University of Paris opinions favourable in general to the Councils, accepted and approved in all their parts the Councils of Constance

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and Basel, but not the Council of Florence. He was sure that no French bishop would sign the decree of superiority of the Pope over the Council; that the ambassadors would protest against it; that the proposed decree would offer ample occasion and matter for contentious books, for or against Rome, and the authority of the Apostolic See would thereby be called in doubt.”¹

The opposition to the Council of Florence, now open and explicit, now silent, lasted in France till 1738, when the French King was induced by Rome to publish a decree authorising the schools of the realm to teach the universality of the Florentine Council. And even then the permission was chiefly due to the theological arguments of some French theologians, as Peter de Marca and others, who proved, or pretended to prove, that the decrees of the Florentine Council about the Pope did not contradict the Gallican system and the famous declaration of the Gallican Church.² The Council of Florence, then, not having represented truly

¹ Card. Sforza Pallavicino, *Storia del Concilio di Trento*, lib. xix. cap. 16, n. 9.

² Card. Hergenröther, *History of the Church*, vol. v. p. 279.

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and really the universal Church, is not, and cannot be, strictly called Ecumenical, and, in consequence, its decrees on the primacy of the Pope cannot be said to be final, appertaining to the faith, and irrevocable.

Let us pass to the Council of Trent. This Council did not come to any decision directly bearing on the spiritual supremacy of the Pope, but indirectly the leaders of the Council, *i.e.* the papal legates, acted as if the Pope were really the supreme and infallible head of the Church, thus paving the way for the Vatican Council which defined it. The Council of Trent helped to strengthen the primacy of the Pope (*a*) Because of the great authority which the Pope, supported by the Emperor of Germany and the King of Spain, was allowed to exercise over the Fathers of the Council from the beginning to the end of the Synod. (*b*) Because the Pope succeeded in warding off all those mischievous questions which, indirectly at least, if treated and approved of by the Fathers, might have been hurtful to his supreme authority over the Church, *e.g.* “whether the jurisdiction of the bishops proceeds directly from God, and not through the

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Pope," and "whether the obligation of the bishop to reside in his diocese be of human or divine right," etc., etc. (c) Because the Pope was able to maintain, throughout the whole Synod, the formula, "On the proposal of the Pope's legates," whereby it was stated and maintained that only the legates had the right to propose any new question to the Fathers of the Council; which principle, accordingly, was acted upon till the end of the Synod. In this way, although the Council of Trent defined nothing whatever about the supremacy of the Pope, yet the same supremacy was constantly taken for granted and acted upon by the Pope's legates, who ruled the assembly with a rod of iron, always keeping before their minds the mandate of the Pope, "not to permit the Council of Trent to turn into a rebellious assembly, like the Councils of Constance and Basel."

Of course, the Council of Trent was very obedient to the Pope; but was it free? Did not its servile submission to the Pope, not spontaneous indeed, but mostly forced on it by external pressure, destroy its liberty? Before I answer this momentous question I shall set down a few considerations as to the

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fewness of the Fathers that met together at the Council as leading up to my main subject, viz. the liberty of the Council.

The Fathers of the Council of Trent were, throughout the Synod, very few. The Council lasted nineteen years, and, when the Fathers were most numerous, never exceeded the number of one hundred and eighty, very few indeed for an Ecumenical Council representing the whole Church.

I subjoin here a table of the bishops that, at one time or another, were present at the Council, distributing them according to the various countries from which they came.

Italian Prelates . . .	187	Through Procurators	2
French „ . . .	26	„ „	1
German „ . . .	2	„ „	4
Spanish „ . . .	31	„ „	4
Portuguese „ . . .	3		
Polish „ . . .	2		
Greek „ . . .	6		
Hungarian „ . . .	2		
English „ . . .	1		
Irish „ . . .	3		
Croatian „ . . .	1		
Moravian „ . . .	1		
Dalmatian „ . . .	3		
	268		11

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The paucity of the bishops at the Council of Trent was remarked by some of the Tridentine Fathers, among others by the Spanish Cardinal Pacheco, who once lamented before the Fathers the fact that “whereas to so weighty a business (the definition of the dogma of Justification) the concourse and the opinion of a great number of Fathers would be desirable, he regretted to see not only that many who ought to have been at the Council were not present at all, but that many of those present departed daily from it. And although most of the latter did so with the intention of returning to Trent by the day appointed for the public session, he did not care much for their presence then at that public ceremony in order to say a simple *mihi placet* (I agree). On the contrary, he wondered how they could pronounce upon what they had not beforehand carefully examined.”¹

Who, then, defined the dogmas, I ask, if the Fathers were few and often absent from the Council, according to the complaint of Cardinal Pacheco? And I answer, the theo-

¹ Card. Sforza Pallavicino, *Storia del Concilio di Trento*, lib. viii. cap. 2.

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logians of the Pope ; some sitting at Trent, others at Rome, mostly members of various religious orders, all followers of Aristotle and St. Thomas, and devoted to the Papacy. These theologians carefully prepared the matter that was to be proposed to the Fathers at Trent ; they themselves discussed it, first at Rome, then at Trent ; the Fathers accepted it generally without much demur and defined it. When the theologians of the Pope foresaw that some opinions would meet with a determined opposition on the part of the Fathers they artfully abstained from proposing them, or even, by ingenious diplomacy, Rome prevented the Fathers from raising them. Hence it is that through many years the Germans, Catholics and Lutherans would not join the Council, because they said it was not truly Ecumenical, owing to the scarcity of the Fathers chiefly from the north of Europe ; and secondly, because it was not free. This last question deserves a fuller consideration.

There are two principal historians of the Council of Trent : the Servite friar Paolo Sarpi, and the Jesuit Cardinal Pallavicino. Neither the one nor the other possessed the true qualities of the historian, *i.e.* truthfulness and

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impartiality. "Sarpi," says Cesar Cantù, "has one aim only, to accuse the Vatican and discredit the Council; Cardinal Pallavicino labours hard to defend the former and exalt the latter. Indeed, the history of the Council of Trent is still to be written. Raynold closely follows Pallavicino, and gives extracts from his book; Lepat copies now Sarpi, now Pallavicino; the memoirs of the Council of Trent by Mendham are good, but he was not sufficiently qualified for the task he put his hand to."¹ As for me, between Paolo Sarpi and the Jesuit Cardinal Pallavicino I shall follow exclusively the latter, making thereby sure that the reader will take no exception to my inferences as derived from such an authoritative source. Well, the Jesuit historian is forced to confess and testify in numberless passages of his work to the pressure which the Popes, either directly or through the legates, emperors, and princes, brought to bear on the Council; although, at the same time, he contends, against Sarpi, that such a pressure did not diminish the liberty of the Council. Whether this be the

¹ Cesare Cantù, *Storia Universale*, Note al libro xv. p. 811. Ediz. Torino, 1888.

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inference which a candid reader would deduce from the careful perusal of Pallavicino's work is very doubtful. Certain it is that the impression which the reading of that book leaves is most shocking. No one who knows what liberty is, and takes to heart the freedom of that august assembly, can restrain a feeling of deep disgust at the sight of the consummate arts of Rome in cajoling, inviting, and even forcing the Fathers to think, vote, and define as Rome wished and had determined. The evidences against the liberty of the Council of Trent may be summarised from Pallavicino's book as follows.

First of all, it is a well-known fact that when Charles V. asked for a General Council to discuss and terminate the Lutheran controversy, the Papal Court would not listen to him. For the Pope was very much afraid that the new Council would prove as rebellious as the two Councils of Constance and Basel, which presumed to call in question the supreme authority of the Pope.¹ However, when the Popes saw that they could not prevent its convocation they regulated it

¹ Card. Sforza Pallavicino, *Storia del Concilio di Trento*, Introd. cap. x.

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in such a way as always to keep in their hands the bit and reins of the horse, guiding, restraining, and curbing it at will. In fact, the Council of Trent was guided and directed by and from Rome, so that it was a common complaint amongst the Fathers of the Council, from the beginning to the end of it, "that the Pope had left them no authority to pass by a single line those limits which he had assigned them in all matter of discussion. This complaint lasted throughout the Council, the last few months only excepted, when the doors to general reformation were thrown widely open."¹

That this complaint of the Fathers was well grounded may be proved by two facts, equally certain and well known. First, the three cardinal legates, who were the leaders of the Council, never acted on their own or on the Council's initiative, but looked to Rome for everything that was to be done, said, or defined; so that, once, even Cardinal Borromeo, the Pope's nephew and secretary, admonished them not to expect everything from Rome, lest the Fathers should have

¹ Card. Sforza Pallavicino, *Storia del Concilio di Trento*, lib. xviii. cap. xi. n. 14.

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reason to believe that not they, but the Pope alone, was the Council. Second, the cardinal legates, following in this the precise instructions of the Pope, reserved to themselves alone the right of proposing to the Council the subject-matter of the dogmas or of reforms to be discussed and defined. By this Rome artfully contrived to keep away from the minds of the Fathers all those questions which referred to the authority of the Pope, defined indeed at the Council of Florence, but not received as yet by all Churches. But the Pope insisted that his supreme authority, defined at the time of Pope Eugenius IV., should not be again thrown into uncertainty by unfriendly discussions. Hence the famous phrase, "On the proposal of the legates," placed at the beginning of every Act of the Council. Against this phrase, or rather, against the new claim and unjust privilege which the Pope arrogated to himself alone, there protested, almost from the beginning to the end of the Council, in the name of his Master, Count de Luna, ambassador of King Philip of Spain, the ambassadors of the Emperor, and many bishops, on the ground that it

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was derogatory to the essential liberty of the Council.

It cannot be denied that in the interval between the Council of Nicæa, where nothing is visible of the Pope but the signatures of his legates, or the second Council of Constantinople, where the microscope must be used to find the Pope, and the Council of Trent, where the Pope's legates are everything, and onwards to the Vatican Council, where the Pope does and undoes all things, the machinery of the Roman Church has perfected itself!

Rome, in fact, succeeded by its wonderful arts in soothing the Council and keeping it in subjection from the beginning to the end, although there were not wanting many amongst the Fathers who, if a good opportunity had offered, would have willingly rebelled against it. Our historian, in dealing with the difficulties which the doctrine of Holy Orders met with amongst the Fathers, remarks: "The French refused to admit in the proposed definition any word which might be interpreted in favour of the superiority of the Pope over the Council, or that might mean

¹ *Storia del Concilio*, etc., lib. cap. xxi. cap. iv.

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approval of the Council of Florence and condemnation of that of Basel. The Spaniards accepted, indeed, the Florentine Synod, and did not demur to the pre-eminence of the Pope over the Councils; but they asked that it should be openly and clearly laid down that the institution and jurisdiction of the bishops was derived from God directly, not through the Pope, although not independent of him. The Italians, one may almost say, almost generally, and a few also of those nations the members of which were fewest at the Council, upheld the opinion more favourable to the Pope with regard to each of the aforesaid points of doctrine under discussion." And somewhat below, in the same book, Pallavicino thus describes the appearance which the Council presented at that time (1563): "The Italians believed the spiritual supremacy of the Pope to be a great honour and no small advantage to their country, which in this far surpassed all other nations. . . . Wherefore in the Council the prelates of that country aimed at no object but the defence and exaltation of the Apostolic See. Most of the Spanish bishops, on the other hand, tended to curtail somewhat the power

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and authority of the cardinals, and to raise the bishops to their ancient rights and privileges . . . so that in their dioceses they might be little less than monarchs. . . . The French prelates, on the contrary, were determined to restrain and reduce the authority of the Pope, according to the principles laid down by the Council of Basel, of which they approved." Now, when we call to mind that the Italians alone at the Council of Trent surpassed in number all the other bishops together, there is no reason to be surprised that Rome, made strong and invulnerable by the sure support of the Italians, could actually prevent anything being discussed or defined which conflicted with its spiritual authority.

This, in fact, was the firm determination of the Popes from the first opening of the Council to its conclusion. When Paul III. sent his legates to open the Council he commanded them never to fail to sign the Acts of the Council with their own names as Presidents of the same, and with that of the Pope, as represented by them. He gave them permission to grant indulgences to the faithful, but at the same time he

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warned them not to allow the Council to do so.¹ And when some of the bishops objected to the prelates of the regular orders being given the right to vote, because the bishops secretly thought the latter too obsequious to the will of the legates, Cardinal del Monte rebuked them most severely, reminding them that they were at Trent, not at Constance or Basel, in which Councils, the Pope not being in any way present, the bishops dared to usurp the papal jurisdiction. The Council of Trent, on the contrary, had been convened by the Pope and was presided over by the Pope in the person of his legates, to whom all bishops owed reverence and obedience.²

To the same cause are to be attributed the constant efforts on the part of the Pope to prevent the Council of Trent from assuming the title "The Council of Trent, representing the universal Church," because the two Councils of Constance and Basel had formerly done so, professing thereby, and later on even explicitly so, that "The Council derives its authority directly from Christ, to which authority every dignity, be it even papal, is

¹ *Storia del Concilio*, etc., lib. v.

² *Ibid.*, lib. vii.

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in duty bound to submit." Nay, more: the Pope reprimanded his legates because they had allowed the title "universal and Ecumenical," "not because it was untrue, but because it was not safe to encourage the self-conceit of some bishops by those high titles."¹

Hence is it that Popes and cardinal legates never yielded to the request of the Council, expressed many times throughout the whole Synod, that the voting should be taken by nationalities, as had been done in the Council of Constance and in other ancient Synods, and not by single heads or by ballot. The reason is that, towards the end of the Council, the Italian prelates, all but slaves to Rome, numbered 150, whereas the other bishops of all nations were scarcely 70. But the legates and the Pope were afraid of a schism, and therefore they always refused what Count de Luna, the ambassadors of the Emperor, the French bishops, and many others demanded of them.²

There were, indeed, two Councils sitting: one at Rome, under the thumb of the Pope;

¹ *Storia del Concilio*, etc, lib. vi. cap. ii.

² *Ibid.*, lib. xxii. cap. iii.; lib. xx. cap. xiii.; and elsewhere.

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the other at Trent, under the thumb of the legates, faithful servants of the Pope. No question, were it ever so unimportant, was ever proposed to the Council at Trent that had not been examined, discussed, and defined beforehand by the papal theologians at Rome. The Council of Trent had little more to do than to register the Roman conclusions, discussing them at times at great length for form's sake, and always according to the logical system of scholastic theology, which, being one and the same at Trent and at Rome, could not, in the end, contradict itself and come to different conclusions. For the papal theologians at Trent were the twin brothers of the papal theologians at Rome, and between the two sets the game was sure to proceed in due order and continue successfully to the end anticipated and intended by the Papal Court.¹

Indeed, the Council of Trent was a piece of masterly wisdom and political ingenuity, and it is impossible to read Pallavicino's work without admiring the genius and the foresight of the several Popes who sat on the throne of St. Peter throughout the Council. Verily, if

¹ *Storia del Concilio*, etc., lib. xx. cap. viii.

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the doctrine of Christ ought to be ascertained by such contrivances, the Tridentine Canons and definitions would deserve the highest credit ; but if liberty, absolute liberty in the Fathers, is the essential requisite of any truly Christian and truly Ecumenical Council, no one can tell to what name the Council of Trent has a right. It was not certainly free ; at least, not sufficiently so to enable the Fathers to speak out their minds on the momentous questions on which they were called to vote.

The undue restraint under which the Pope and his legates kept the Council drew from the Fathers, more than once, the loudest complaints. Once Mgr. Martelli, Bishop of Fiesole, “ rose to say, with great force, that the Fathers had joined the Council at great expense and with no little personal inconvenience ; and yet, not only were they not allowed freely to manifest their opinions and decisions, but, while discussing, they were shut up in private meetings, as if in so many jails. Let the bishops rouse themselves from their drowsiness ; let them see how wrongfully they were treated. . . . The legate, Cardinal Del Monte, asked Mgr. Martelli if he had really resolved to appeal from the Council to God. The

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Bishop of Fiesole, having been warned by the legates that such an appeal savoured of heresy, withdrew it immediately. The Cardinal also asked him whether he still upheld what he had formerly said, viz. that the bishops acted on earth in the place of Christ. 'I hold it,' said he, 'till I am convinced of the contrary.' The Cardinal then reprimanded him and forced him into submission."¹

"Later on, when the Council, on account of the plague, was transferred from Trent to Bologna, the legates asked the same Mgr. Martelli if he intended to join them at Bologna. 'Not now,' he answered, 'because my slender means do not permit me to do so.' 'On the contrary,' rejoined the first legate with great bitterness, 'you ought to go to Bologna in order to atone for your contumacy.'"²

Martelli's contumacy consisted in this only, that he gave out his opinions freely and with great frankness. But there was no help. In the eyes of the legates and the majority of the Italian bishops, ardently attached to Rome, the Fathers that spoke freely and frankly were heretics, ill-bred, fools, rascals, and worse. These vile epithets are not of

¹ *Storia del Concilio*, etc., lib. vii. cap. iv. ² *Ibid.*, lib. ix.

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my invention. They are to be found, even to this day, in the *Diary* of the secretary of the Council, Angelo Massarelli, who thus styled all those bishops who, for reasons of conscience, did not share the Pope's opinion, or yield blindly to the injunctions of Rome.

The question that was debated then, *i.e.* at the very beginning of the Council, was whether the Fathers should commence their work by discussing and defining the points of Christian doctrine denied or altered by Luther, or rather by reforming the very low morals of the Christian world. The Emperor Charles V., the King of France, the French and Spanish bishops, the Germans, and in general the Christian people, desired that the Council should put its hand immediately to the work of reform, as more necessary and conducive to the peace of the world. The Pope, on the contrary, being afraid lest the Council should venture of its own accord to reform the Papal Court, to which, he believed, it had no right; wishing, moreover, to crush Lutheran doctrine, which was fast undermining the authority of the Holy See and the unity of the Church, accepted the view that the Council should commence its work by defining

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the controverted points of Christian dogma. Most of the Fathers then present at the Council (scarcely fifty), stood fast by reform, whereupon the Secretary Massarelli writes about them in his *Diary* as follows :

“ In like manner, of the same opinion [in favour of the reform] is the Bishop of Fiesole, who is very obstinate and headstrong ; . . . an ignoramus, malign. . . . He is a beast, and says things becoming only an illiterate person and a madman.

“ Also the Bishop of Chiozza, who, though a learned man, . . . yet is of small brains, a madman, . . . ungrateful, unbelieving, and ill-bred.

“ Item, of the same opinion is the Bishop of Capaccio. He favours this decision out of pure malice. . . . He is vain and proud, of small literary culture, and of an ill-balanced judgment.

“ Item, the Bishop of Bitonto, Father Cornelius. This man is very well read, but possesses so very little understanding and prudence that there is scarcely any difference between him and a horse.

“ Item, all the Spanish bishops, Astorga, Pacense, Lanciano, Castellamare, of whom I

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shall say nothing more in detail than that they are Spaniards. . . .

“The French bishops likewise followed this opinion: *i.e.* the Archbishop Aquensis, etc., etc. But the French, being very candid, show that they want the reform out of sincere zeal.

“Item, the Bishop of Aquino, since he is old and in his second childhood, it is no wonder if he has little or no brains, as he certainly has no conscience at all. . . . The other opinion, embraced by the Popes and the Legates, *i.e.* to commence the Council by the discussion of dogmas, was adhered to by all Catholic prelates, as Ivrea, Feltre, etc., etc.”¹

¹ I give here the Italian original of Massarelli's *Diary*, which I have done into English word by word. “Item, il Vescovo di Fiesole, il quale è molto ostinato ed imprudente . . . ignorante e maligno . . . È una bestia e dice cose da ignorante et pazzo. Item, il Vescovo di Chiozza, il quale, sebbene è dotto, . . . pure è di poco cervello, pazzo . . . ingrato, infedele e villano. Item, della stessa opinione è il Vescovo di Capaccio. Costui lo fa per malignità . . . è persona vana et superba, di poche lettere et di giudizio irregolato. Item, il Vescovo di Bitonto, Frate Cornelio. . . . Costui ha assai buone lettere, ma di giudizio e di prudenza è si scemo, che non è differenza da lui a un cavallo. Item, tutti gli Spagnuoli, cioè Astorga, Pacense, Lanciano, Castellamare, de' quali non dirò altre particolarità, se non che sono Spagnuoli. . . . Di questa opinione erano anche i Francesi, cioè l'Arcivescovo Aquense, etc., etc.; i quali, per essere persone più semplici, mostrano che si movevano per buon zelo. Item, il Vescovo di

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We may ask here, did the secretary of the Council, Angelo Massarelli, accurately reflect in his *Diary* the minds and opinions of the legates and of the ultra-papal party? Some may think he did not, but the contemporary Tridentine documents are there to prove that Massarelli was a faithful echo of the fanatical Italian faction, which ruled the Council. In consequence, according to the latter party, any one who conforms himself to the opinions of the legates is catholic, wise, prudent, holy, and whoever differs from them ever so little is an ass, a fool, an imbecile, and suspected in his faith. Things being so, could the Fathers of the Council of Trent be truly and really free?

Nay, more. Very often the legates were not content to rebuke the Fathers in words: they passed to deeds. On January 15, 1547, a great dispute arose in the Council about that part of its title, "Representing the universal Church," which many Fathers wanted to have added

Aquino, quale, essendo vecchio et rimbambito, non è meraviglia se ha poco cervello, come certo ancora ha poco coscienza, etc. . . . Dall' altra opinione (cio è da quella che sosteneva si cominciassero dai dogmi) erano tutti i Prelati Cattolici, come Ivrea, Feltre, etc., etc." (Concilium Tridentinum, Diariorum Pars I., Massarelli, *Diarium*, tom. i. p. 882. Edited Sebastianus Merkle, 1902). Massarelli wrote two diaries. My quotation is from the first.

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to the title of the Council; the legates, on the contrary, refusing stubbornly to accept it. Two days afterwards the Bishop of Fiesole read a paper in which he reproved the bishops for acting, in some cases, as delegates of the Apostolic See. Mgr. Pighini, Bishop of Aliffe, an official of the Papal court (*Sacra Rota*), rose to defend the Holy See, and, interrupting the Bishop of Fiesole, said that the opinions of the latter were heretical. Another official of the Papal Court, the Bishop of Albenga (auditor of the *Camera Apostolica*), joined Mgr. Pighini in vituperating the Bishop of Fiesole. Then, to defend the latter, rose the Spanish Cardinal Pacheco, echoed by many Spanish bishops, chiefly by the Bishop of Calaorra, who bitterly and openly complained that the Council was not free, ending his forcible speech by publicly asking permission to go back to his diocese, as it was of no use to sit at a Council which was kept under undue restraint all the while. Notwithstanding all this, the first legate asked the unfortunate Bishop of Fiesole to deliver up to him the incriminating paper, and the latter immediately complied. Finally, Cardinal del

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Monte, with a serious speech, succeeded in putting out the flames of discord and restoring peace to the Council.

Another prelate whom the fanatical Italian faction harassed and persecuted on account of his freedom of speech, was Melchior Avosmedianus, Bishop of Guadix, in Spain. "On December 1, 1562, he was to give his opinion on those words of the Canon proposed by the legates which said that 'the bishops are called by the Pope to share part of his pastoral care.' He objected that the wording of the Canon was too narrow and illiberal, because, said he, if anybody should be elected to the episcopate, according to the Apostolic or Nicene Canons, he would become a true bishop, even if he were not chosen by the Pope, the aforesaid Canons decreeing this only, that the newly elected bishop be ordained and consecrated by the metropolitan. St. John Chrysostom, St. Nicholas, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and others had been true bishops, although not chosen by the Pope. At these words of the Bishop of Guadix a great tumult broke out in the Council. Some shouted at him, others vituperated him, others hissed at him, stamped,

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and cried out loudly: ‘Put him out! A curse on him! Burn him at the stake! he is a heretic!’¹ Next day the French Cardinal of Lorraine complained, in a very serious speech, of the behaviour of the Italian Fathers against the Bishop of Guadix, and added that, should such a thing befall one of his countrymen, he would appeal from the present Council to another more free.”²

“Seven months later, on the eve of the twenty-third session of the Council, July 15, 1563, in which the Canons of Holy Orders were to be publicly read and approved, the Spanish Fathers, through Count de Luna, ambassador of King Philip II., asked that, where the Canons spoke of the institution of the bishops, the words ‘The bishops are such by divine ordination’ should be changed into the following: ‘The bishops have been instituted by Christ.’ The Italian Fathers and the legates would not permit the proposed change, because they were afraid lest the Spanish formula might prove, in the

¹ “A queste parole si eccitò gran commozione nel Concilio, e alcuni gridarono, fischiarono, batterono i piedi, e sclamarono: Si mandi fuori! anatema! sia bruciato! è eretico!” Original words of the historian Pallavicino.

² *Storia del Concilio*, etc., lib. xix. cap. v.

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course of time, a stumbling-block to the authority of the Pope. Accordingly, most of those theologians asserted that all bishops depend on the Pope, nay, not a few went so far as to maintain that Christ consecrated St. Peter alone bishop, and through him all the others. They threatened, therefore, if the words proposed by the Spaniards were accepted, to raise great tumult in the Council and to disturb the session. On the evening before the session the cardinal legates called privately on Count de Luna and besought him to desist from his request. The latter at last yielded to their entreaties, and he in his turn induced his bishops to follow his example and be contented, though reluctantly, with the formula approved of at Rome. Thus it became possible to hold the twenty-third session, and the words 'instituted by Christ' were not inserted in the Canon."¹

In the time of Pope Pius IV. the French and Spanish bishops wanted by all means to define that "the jurisdiction of the bishops proceeds immediately from God." It is simply marvellous to see the subtle arts and fine

¹ *Storia del Concilio*, etc., lib. xxi. cap. xi.

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diplomacy practised by Delfino, Nuncio at the Court of the Emperor Ferdinand, where the Jesuit Canisius ruled supreme, by the legates at Trent with the ambassadors of the princes, by the papal theologians at the Council and at Rome, in order to prevent that definition. The Pope, however, not hoping he could prevail on the Fathers to define him to be "Rector of the universal Church," preferred that nothing at all should be said about his claims rather than have them denied or curtailed by an unfriendly Council. He trusted that another Council would be more favourable to him.¹

Again, "When, in the time of Pius IV., the French bishops, under the guidance of the Cardinal of Lorraine, were daily expected at Trent, the legates, acting under advice from Rome, hastened to have the dogmas approved, because 'Rome was afraid of the French.' In fact, at most of the sessions only Italian and Spanish bishops were present, the former, however, in far greater numbers than the latter. Finally the French arrived, and the first legate introduced the Canon about 'the duty of the bishops to reside in their

¹ *Ibid.*, lib. xxi. cap. xi.

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dioceses,' and the Spanish bishops were warned by their king to support the Pope against the French, because the latter were ill-disposed towards the Holy See." ¹

If the Council of Trent had been really free it would have arrived at the same results as those of Constance and Basel. As, however, it was not free, being kept, from its opening to its close, under the thumb of the Pope, of the papal legates, and of several emperors, kings, and princes then friendly from political motives to the reigning Pope, it ended as it did, leaving the papal authority as it had been defined by a few bishops at the Council of Florence. The Vatican Council crowned the efforts of the Papacy both at Florence and at Trent by declaring the Pope infallible, and supreme ruler of the universal Church.

The arts with which Rome succeeded in soothing, cajoling, and to a certain extent befooling the French Cardinal of Lorraine are simply wonderful. From his arrival at Trent till his departure he was honoured, praised, applauded, extolled, but, above all, never left alone with his French friends.

¹ *Storia del Concilio*, etc., lib. xvii., xviii., xix.

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Rome knew the amiable foibles and the weak side of the man. First Gualtieri, then Visconti were the guardian angels whom the Pope assigned to the dangerous cardinal with the object of keeping him good, quiet, and submissive to the Holy See, and in order to spy on and report to headquarters all his words and doings. And when the French cardinal grew suspicious of Gualtieri, Cardinal Navagero, by command of Pius IV., took his place as bodyguard of the lofty and pompous, yet candid Frenchman. The Italian suppleness, diplomacy, and ingenuity got the upper hand over the French impulsiveness and candour. The French cardinal remained to the end faithful to the Pope, and gave no great trouble to Rome.¹

In conclusion, it may be said that if the apostles in the first Council at Jerusalem commenced their decrees by the formula, "Visum est Spiritui Sancto et nobis (It has seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us)," the Fathers of the Council of Trent might have properly said, "Visum est præcipue Romæ, et aliquantulum nobis (It has seemed good chiefly to Rome, and in some degree

¹ *Ibid.*, lib. xvii., xviii., xix., *passim*.

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to us also).” Indeed, not without reason, the French Ambassador Lansac used to say, very wittily, that the Holy Ghost arrived at Trent in the mail of the cardinal legates, which mail ran to and fro between Rome and Trent every day.

The Jesuit historian of the Council of Trent closes his ponderous work with a final chapter, in which he strains every nerve to show, against Paolo Sarpi, that the Council was free. Well, the Servite Father may be wrong in this or that particular point ; but Pallavicino is certainly wrong in his general assumption and presumption of the liberty of the Council. He has failed to support his beloved theme by arguments ; nay, in his book there is more than enough to force on any candid reader the conviction that the Council of Trent was in no way free.

Of course, no physical violence was inflicted on the Fathers ; but, however reluctant they were, their fear of substantial injury or disadvantage, their reverence and regard for the legates and for the Pope, the influences of superiors, emperors, kings, and princes, and their persuasions, prayers, commands, rewards, punishments, blandishments, and the like,

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acted on the minds and wills of the Fathers all through the Council, and made them submit, whether they willed or not, to the Pope. Finally, it may be affirmed that the Council of Trent was a splendid achievement on the part of Rome, a masterpiece of human prudence, wisdom, and foresight; but essentially it was a very human work. Whether the Holy Ghost had part in it, and to what extent, it is impossible to say, but what we can say with certainty is that the Council of Trent was not free, and did not sufficiently represent the universal Church. The Italian bishops, wholly committed by material and national motives to the side of the Pope, commanded so many votes in the Council that alone they could counterbalance all the rest of the Fathers. If the Council of Trent had been perfectly free, and the voting had been not by personal ballot, but, as justice demanded, by nationalities, it would have had the same termination as the Council of Constance, and would have restored peace to the Church. As it was it caused the Roman Church to plunge headlong into Ultramontanism, which in the long run will prove fatal to it.

Let us now pass to the Vatican Council.

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This Council was conceived in the bosom of the Society of Jesus. A young Jesuit, well known afterwards for his fanaticism, his inflated rhetoric, his haughty and overbearing temper, was its father and originator. He was studying theology at the Roman College when he conceived the desire of seeing the Pope's infallibility defined. Thereupon he bound himself, with a solemn vow, to promote its definition by all the means in his power. With the permission of his superiors, he had the formula of his vow printed on a leaflet, which he scattered broadcast, chiefly among the students of the French Seminary. In 1867 occurred the Centenary of St. Peter, which, by its festive celebrations, attracted to Rome a great number of foreign bishops and priests, chiefly French, and a multitude of Italian prelates. The Jesuit Father did not let the chance slip. He advertised his great vow amongst the crowd of strangers, and himself wrote an article in the Jesuit magazine, the *Civiltà Cattolica*, then at the high-water mark of its fame. The title of the article was, "Un Nuovo Tributo a S. Pietro"¹ (A New

¹ *Civiltà Cattolica*, Serie VI. vol. x. pp. 641-51.

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Tribute to St. Peter).” To the two tributes which the faithful paid already to St. Peter, the tribute of blood (soldiers who volunteered in the service of the Pope), and the tribute of money (Peter’s pence), he asked all good Catholics to add a third, viz. the voluntary submission of their minds to the Catholic belief of the infallibility of the Pope.¹

The agitation started by the fanatical Jesuit at Rome was taken up by other fanatical Catholics all over the world. It was, of course, backed up by the Vatican, and ended with the convocation of the Council, which was officially opened on December 8, 1869.

There assembled at the Vatican Council 750 Fathers, amongst whom were 46 cardinals (more than half of them Italians), 32 Generals of Religious Orders, 84 French, 48 Austrian, 19 German, 35 English, and some 50 Spanish prelates. From Poland, Russia, and Portugal no bishop was present at the Council, because they were forbidden by their respective governments. The non-Italian prelates, then, all told, did not number 300, whereas the others, *i.e.* 450, were either

¹ Cecconi, *Storia del Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano*, vol. ii. p. 489, note.

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Italians or apostolic vicars, dependent directly on the Pope or on the *Propaganda Fide* for their election and means of support. Pius IX., moreover, granted free lodging and maintenance to some 180 poor bishops or apostolic vicars, who paid back his bounty by declaring him infallible and supreme head of the Church. Of course, I say this to state the fact, and not to censure the Pope, although, the Council having been chiefly convened to define the infallibility of the Pope, it might have seemed more proper on the part of the Pope to abstain from anything which could be interpreted into canvassing for votes.¹

One of the first things the Pope did was to appoint a Commission to receive and examine the petitions or proposals of the Fathers, in order to refer them afterwards to the Council, or to reject them. The importance of this Commission can scarcely be exaggerated, as the general turn which the Council took depended to a great extent on it. Now twenty-six of its members, *i.e.* almost all, were chosen directly by the Pope,

¹ Cf. Th. Granderath, S.J., *Geschichte des Vatikanischen Konzils*. Herder, Freiburg, i. Br. 1903.

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and not, as any one might have expected, by the Council. The Pope did so, it was said, afterwards, in order to avoid unnecessary confusion and trouble in the Council. It may be so; but was not the liberty of the Council violated by such proceedings? Is it not better, in a public assembly, to permit some tumult and disturbance, than to crush liberty of speech in its members?

Meanwhile, there was no end to the written requests and formal solicitations to the Council to define the infallibility of the Pope. However, those who opposed it did not remain idle. They busied themselves, though in vain, to frustrate the able manœuvres of the opposite party, which enjoyed the strength of the majority and the favour of the Papal Court. Against the definition, or its opportuneness, Cardinal Rauschen wrote a paper, which was signed by a certain number of German, Austrian, and Hungarian bishops. A second paper was likewise written by several bishops of Upper Italy. A third one explained what many French bishops thought of the proposed definition. A fourth came from the North American bishops. A fifth and last was committed to paper

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by oriental bishops. In all 136 prelates, of various nationalities, declared themselves against the definition of papal infallibility. All these petitions were presented, not to the Pope in person, but, as had been arranged, to the Committee of the Council for receiving proposals from the Fathers. This Committee, being almost exclusively composed of men ardently attached to the Papacy, refused to take into consideration the five petitions, which accordingly came to nothing. Requests in favour of the definition got naturally the upper hand, and were forwarded to the Council.

Was the Vatican Council really free? If we read the pamphlet *La situation des choses à Rome*, written during the Council, at Rome, and by one of its members, the answer to the above question cannot be doubtful. The Vatican Council was not free. The pamphlet proves its case by the following arguments.

(a) The Council was handcuffed by the papal theologians, before its convocation, by a set of doctrinal schemes which settled beforehand what subjects were to be handled and in what way, viz. in accordance with the object aimed at by the Holy See.

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(b) The fourteen rules or limits of discussion imposed by the Pope on the Council deprived the dissenting party of all means of making itself heard.

(c) The institution by the Pope of the Commission, of which we have just spoken, gave up the Council practically into the hands of a few meanly obsequious to the Pope, the more so that the members of the Commission were chosen by the Pope and not by the Council.

(d) The creation of four deputations, one of which, that on dogmas, was composed of men wholly devoted to the Pope, intensely hostile to the modern world, and saturated with that kind of scholastic theology which ignores difficulties, because unacquainted with their historical or scientific grounds.

(e) The excessive number of Italian bishops (nearly 250), about 90 of whom had been up to a few years before political subjects of the Pope. All those bishops were *a priori* favourable to the exaggerated claims of the Papacy and always ready to overwhelm with their numbers the votes of their colleagues who differed from them.

(f) The admission to the Council of the

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apostolic vicars, strictly and solely dependent on Rome, etc. The pamphlet in question was inspired, if not actually written, by Mgr. Dupanloup, one of the chief opponents of papal infallibility.

In Rome, as everywhere else in the Catholic world, two religious parties, bitterly hostile to one another, stood face to face; one fanatically devoted to the Papacy, the other hostile to it, though not in the same degree and proportion as the other was favourable. Amongst the prelates of the Council determined on declaring the Pope infallible and placing him at the head of an absolute monarchy there were a few learned men, mostly, however, rhetorically so, like Mgr. Manning, Archbishop of Westminster; whereas it cannot be questioned that the weight of true learning, deep and vast knowledge, was on the side of the bishops of the minority opposed to papal infallibility. We find in the minority names like the following: Hefele, Von Ketteler, Greith, Verot, Las Cases, Strossmayer, Maret, Rauschen, Schwarzenberg, Dupanloup, Haynald, Melchers, and others equally celebrated. The latter, moreover, were backed up by three-fourths of the Catholic men of

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learning throughout the world. In fact, as the Papal Nuncio at the Court of Bavaria wrote to Cardinal Caterini in 1868: "Almost all the Catholic professors of theology in the various universities of Germany who enjoy any reputation for learning and science, side with the great party of the German savants bitterly hostile to Rome. If we except a few that have pursued their studies at Rome (*Doctor romanus*, they say, *asinus germanus*) and perhaps a few others, whom I could not even point out, all the rest, professors or learned men in the various branches of theological knowledge, and priests into the bargain, more or less share the aspirations of that party against the spiritual authority of Rome."¹ Indeed, when, later on, Dr. Döllinger publicly protested against the Vatican Council, he was adhered to by the entire body of the University of Breslau, by 25 professors of the University of Bonn, by 13 of that of Prague, by as many of that of Münster, by 150 teachers of Cologne, by 138 of Baden, etc. During the Council, likewise, a great number of German and Austrian bishops declared themselves against the infallibility of

¹ Cecconi, *Storia del Concilio Vaticano*.

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the Pope, followed in this by 25 French bishops, the most learned and influential of that nation, by a few bishops of upper Italy, and by many others of different nationalities. The learned historian of the Councils, Bishop Hefele, not only opposed the definition with all his might, but also advised his colleagues not to submit after the definition, the Council not having been free.

But it was of no use. The Italian, the Spanish, and the Belgian bishops, together with the apostolic vicars (over 100) overwhelmed with their votes the rest of the Council. The definition of the supremacy and the infallibility of the Pope was in their hands. They wanted to have it defined, and they had it. No power on earth could prevent that definition. The Pope was declared supreme and infallible on July 18, 1870, crowning with that solemn definition the incessant efforts of the Papacy from the Council of Florence to our own times.

The tyrannous majority favourable to the Pope thus obtained a complete victory. The vanquished minority left the Council before the public session at which the definition of the infallibility was proclaimed. But did the

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victorious majority represent the whole Church? At most, its definitions are binding on the Roman Church alone, because half the Churches of Christianity were not represented at all in the Council. But, leaving aside the Greek, Russian and Protestant Churches, even within the Roman Church it can be shown that the Council scarcely represented it. In fact, the Italian bishops are now 368, against 681 for the rest of the Catholic world, even if we include the bishops of oriental rites. They alone, therefore, form more than one-third of the whole body of Catholic bishops throughout the world.¹ In 1870 the Italian bishops at the Council were no less than 250, thus counterbalancing half the Council. It must be remarked, moreover, that the dioceses of most of these Italian bishops are very small, mere parishes at times, of a few thousand souls. Yet these bishops were equal in voting power to the Archbishop of Paris, whose diocese numbered over 2,200,000 souls, to the Archbishop of Breslau, who governed 1,700,000 Catholics, to the Archbishop of Cologne, caring for 1,400,000 Catholics, to the Archbishop of

¹ Cf. *Gerarchia Pontificia* 1902. Roma. Typografia Propaganda Fede.

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Cambray, who likewise was in charge of 1,300,000 souls. Is this justice, or even mere fairness?

Nay, more. The true dogmas of faith need to be defined by a decisive majority of votes. They require an almost unanimous consent, as was anciently established by the Fathers, and as was proclaimed at the Council of Florence by the Greek Archbishop, Bessarion, in these words: “*Debere Ecclesiam Dei unum in locum congregatam de rebus fidei judicare, ac secundum præcepta divinæ legis communi omnium consensu ferre sententiam; quæ communia sunt, communi sensu oportere terminari* (The Church of God gathered in one place in order to judge about things appertaining to the faith, must do so according to the commandments of the divine law, and pass judgment with the consent of all; for the things that are common to all are to be established with the consent of all).” And Pius IV. thus wrote to the Fathers of the Council of Trent: “*Ne definirentur nisi ea de quibus inter Patres unanimi consensu constaret* (He admonished them to define those points only of Christian doctrine upon which the Fathers agreed with unanimous consent).” Was there such unanimous consent

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on the infallibility of the Pope and on the constitution of the Church? Who can say so with any approach to truth? There was, on the contrary, a very strong minority, made up mostly of university men, which decidedly opposed both the one and the other. It was, however, crushed by the victorious majority. But is a mere majority of votes sufficient, in a Council, to turn a given point of doctrine into an article of faith? Let Dr. Le Noir answer in my stead: "La simple majorité," he writes, "n'est pas regardée par la plupart des théologiens comme suffisante pour ce résultat [of turning a point of Christian doctrine into an article of faith]; ils exigent l'unanimité morale; c'est-à-dire un tel accord que la minorité dissidente passe comme inaperçue, écrasée qu'elle est par le nombre." "The mere majority is not regarded by most theologians as sufficient for turning a point of doctrine into an article of faith; they require a moral unanimity, *i.e.* such an accord that the dissenting minority may be passed by as a negligible quantity, being crushed by numbers."¹ Now I ask again, did the dis-

¹ Le Noir, *Dictionnaire des droits de la raison dans la foi de l'Église*, chap. v. § 5, n. 443. Edition Migne, 1860, Paris.

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senting minority at the Vatican Council appear as non-existing? Could it be overlooked and disregarded? It was indeed crushed by the quasi-material violence of the greater number; but it could not be passed by and overlooked as non-existing. No! Never!

Enough of the Vatican Council. It is not closed yet, and it might be reopened under new circumstances and conditions of thought. The Vatican Council of 1870 was not free, and in consequence it can have no binding force on the conscience of Catholics. It was null and void of any effect; this is the verdict of reason and history.

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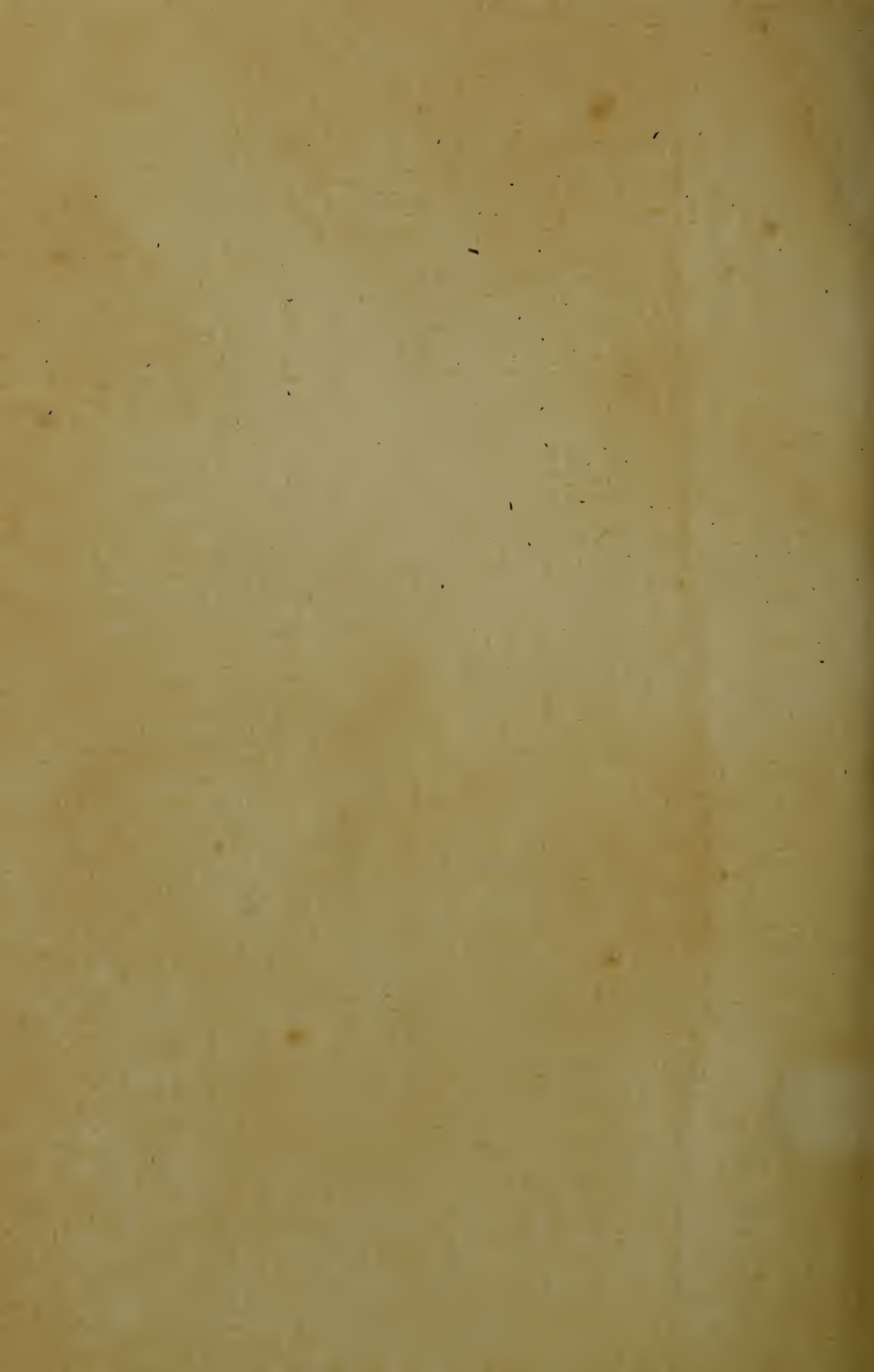
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